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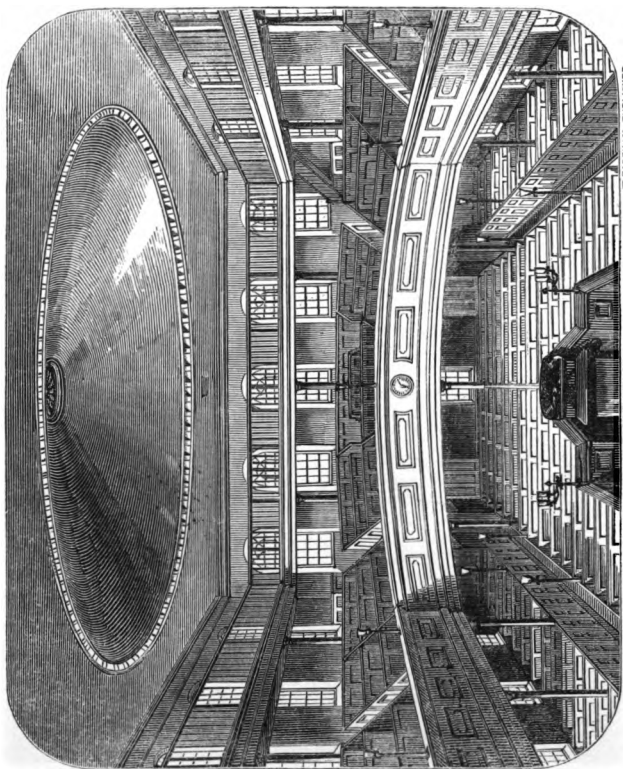
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INTERIOR OF BROAD STREET CHAPEL.

Historical Memorials

OF

BROAD STREET CHAPEL,

Reading:

BEING SKETCHES OF ITS PASTORS AND ITS PROGRESS.

BY

WILLIAM LEGG, B. A.

Pastor.



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Preface.

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THIS is a book of remembrance. It seeks to record the faith, the piety, the patience, the alms-deeds, the painful labours, and the peaceful progress, of a Church that has worshipped, and of Pastors who have served it in the Gospel, on a time-honoured spot. The records of the Church should be more minutely legible than all other history beside, as the latter traces God in Providence, the former, in Grace. The Church does not willingly suffer the memory of her good and useful to fade away. She calls them into her service, and is blessed in their usefulness, when living; and consecrates them to an honorable mention, and for a bright example to her children, when dead.

The following History was read by the Pastor at a Tea Meeting held in the New Hall, Reading, on the evening of Monday, December second, eighteen hundred and fifty, for the purpose of celebrating the fiftieth year since the erection of the Chapel to which it refers. It is now published at the request of those who heard it. After it had been read, the following resolution was unanimously passed :

Moved by Mr. J. Brain, sen., and seconded by Mr. T. C. Williams, " That the History of the Church and Congregation connected with Broad Street Chapel, which has now been read, should call forth our adoring gratitude to God for graciously preserving his cause there for so many years ; for the peace and prosperity at present granted to the Church, and the Institutions which it cherishes ; and for enabling us to celebrate this fiftieth year since the opening of the present sanctuary, under cir-

cumstances so well calculated to awaken hope for the future: and that our much-esteemed Pastor be requested to publish these interesting records as a memorial of the Lord's goodness."

As to the propriety of publishing under this sanction there can be no doubt, and if the occasion had not led to its being done now, it is probable that the records of the elder time would soon have perished, as it was by the merest incident that some of the most interesting materials were discovered, while for another portion the writer is indebted to a Friend who delights in antiquarian research. In publishing the fourth chapter, the Author feels that he has tried a somewhat hazardous experiment. He can only say that he has spoken the truth in modesty. The confession of faith was requested for publication at the time when it was made, but for various reasons the request was not complied with, and the rest of the docu-

ments had been made public in the natural progress of events. He sends forth the book with an earnest prayer that the blessing of Him who is Head of the Church universal, without which our doings are nothing worth, may rest upon it.

CASTLE HILL,

MARCH, 1851.

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HISTORICAL MEMORIALS.

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Chapter First.

FROM 1662 TO 1796.

Introduction—Rise of the cause of Christ at Broad Street Chapel—
Rev. Thos. Juice—Rev. Samuel Doolittle—Rev. George Burnett—
A secession—Rev. John Burnett—Rev. Evan Jones—Rev. T.
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grandson, the Honorable Mr. Justice Talfourd.

THE slightest attention to the capacities of man's nature, and his rank in the scale of being, plainly show that it is but little which, as an individual, he can either accomplish or enjoy. The highest authority has asserted that, even amid Eden's bowers, it was not good for man to live alone, and that "two are better than one" is not more the dictate of the largest wisdom, than of universal experience. From the social principle and the light of nature, there springs the obligation to unite our individual influence and relative powers to promote the supreme end of our existence—the worship of the everlasting

B

God, the universal Parent. Sound faith and sound philosophy unite in prompting us to 'exalt his name together.' The fact and the obligation being admitted, the most important inquiry is as to the principles on which acceptable worship can be rendered. And as God has given us a revelation of his will for this end, we may be sure that no principle can be sound, that is not sanctioned by the Holy Scriptures. These sacred writings make known the glory which attends a christian Church, to be the glory of God, and the holiness and happiness of man. The ministration of divine truth, attended by the influence of the Holy Spirit, forms in men right sentiments, produces holy dispositions, and causes them voluntarily to unite with each other in a covenant, for the purposes of making manifest their faith in Christ Jesus, and their obedience to him as their Lord and master ; and at the same time a readiness to receive others, who appear to be like-minded, and to have given themselves up to the Lord, and express a desire to walk in love with his people. Such a society the New Testament denominates a Church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood, and drawn into the compass of his own humanity ; so that they are

made members incorporate "of his body—of his flesh—and of his bones." It is an ennobling and glorious view of his privileges and his position, that the believer should not regard himself as a single, an isolated man; but in the high and heavenly relationships, which knit him to the whole body of Christ Jesus. He is a "fellow-citizen with the saints," he is one of Christ's universal church, and so of the "household of God." The members were collected by the gospel, and "builded together by the Spirit;" they knew nothing of the subjection of the human mind to human authority in matters of religion; the authority of Christ was the only one which their conscience owned. They took his revealed will for their articles of faith, their rules of worship, and their directory in the choice of persons to fill the offices which he has appointed. This, the Churches that follow the New Testament consider as their inalienable right, that no one can take from them, but by a most unjust usurpation—that they cannot relinquish without betraying the interests of Zion's King.

Churches established by human legislation are founded on principles subversive of all the above particulars; they acknowledge another Head be-

sides Christ ; are composed of members, not as believers but as parishioners, substituting for christian character geographical boundary, and imposing religious ceremonies, rites, and seasons, which cannot be shown to have any sanction from the word of God. If they had such sanction, it would be the duty, as it would be the interest of every good christian, to conform to the Church of his country, but as it is, many consider themselves bound in conscience to dissent from such things—to be Nonconformists, to form themselves into societies or churches independent of the influence of others, that they may be accountable to Christ alone as their master and Lord. This plan appears most agreeable to the will of Christ, and to the genius of his religion, inasmuch as it has a direct tendency to preserve the simplicity of the Gospel, to secure the rights of conscience, and answer the great ends of christian fellowship and divine worship.

Of this Independent persuasion, there appears to have existed a society or Church at BROAD STREET, READING, BERKS, about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Memorials.

The Rev. THOMAS JUICE appears to have been the first Pastor of the Church at Broad Street, Reading. It is not however certain from Calamy's notice of him, whether he found a Church existing, or gathered one by his own labours. He was ejected from St. Nicholas, Worcester, and became one of the St. Bartholomew Nonconformists. Nor is it known whether he was ever attached to the system of Episcopacy, as it should ever be borne in mind, in deploring the cruelties inflicted by the elevation of the Episcopal Church to power after the Restoration, that many of the two thousand noble men, who became the victims of a narrow and persecuting policy, had never been Episcopalians at all. They were put into the Churches during the Commonwealth. It is necessary to remember this, in order to modify, if not to mitigate, our indignation against the persecuting bigotry to which it has been common to assign their grievous sufferings. It is but justice to the Episcopalians that this fact should be admitted, as it was not to be expected that any Church, that consents to wield the civil power, should receive to co-ordinate authority and equal

privileges, such a host of powerful and learned men, who had no sympathy with her distinctive principles. Nor can we form a true estimate of the character of these early Nonconformists if we forget, that many of them had no objection to an establishment of religion by law, provided they could have got one sufficiently tolerant and comprehensive. Their views in some respects corresponded with those of the five hundred, who in our own times have left the Presbyterian establishment of Scotland. The former contended and suffered for the rights of conscience, the latter for the crown rights of the Redeemer, and these things differ more in name than in reality. It was not that either of them loved an establishment less, but that they loved Christ and peace of conscience more. In both cases their practice was right, while their theory was wrong, and as in the case of the Puritans, their right practice made their theory right before they died, so the existing generation will not pass away, till every free Churchman, astonished at the might and majesty of the Voluntary principle, will repudiate for ever all state interference and controul. Admitting however these facts, which have been too much overlooked, it is probable that there never

was in the world, a more enlightened body of Divines than those wonderful men, who first preached the Gospel to these Churches. Their sepulchres are with us, their institutions are with us, and their doctrines are with us to this day. May their mantles rest upon us, and may we emulate the faithfulness and zeal with which they preached the gospel! They are gone to their last account and we are rapidly following. The time is short. Whatever we do we must do quickly.

To return to Mr. Juice. Calamy tells us that he was a sober, grave, serious, peaceable, blameless, able minister. He lost £100 a year by his ejection, after which, to procure a livelihood for himself, his wife and three children, he taught a little school and preached at Reading till the Corporation Act took effect, when he was forced to abscond. Before he made his escape, both he and another ejected Clergyman, supposed to have been the Rev. Christopher Fowler,* were

* The only Clergyman ejected from the Churches in Reading by the Act of Uniformity, in 1662, was the Rev. Christopher Fowler, of St. Mary's. As it may be interesting to know something of this good man, we subjoin the following notice of all that is extant of him. Christopher Fowler, M.A., was born at Marlborough in 1610, and educated at Oxford, where he continued some time a preacher.

hidden by a godly woman, Mrs. Thorn, wife of Mr. Thorn, a Tanner in Mill lane, in the centre of a bark rick, from which Mr. Juice crept out when the scouts were not in the way, and preached to his afflicted people, hastening, when the psalmless service was concluded, back to the place of his concealment, where that holy ministering woman supplied the "brethren in tribulation" with food. As the angel knew the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea-side, no doubt some "ministering servant" of that high order, made the bark rick by the brook the object of his peculiar care.

From thence he went to Woodhey, in Berks, after that to St. Margaret's, Lothbury, London, and from there to the Vicarage of St. Mary's, Reading. At that time he was also a Fellow of Eton College, and must consequently have been an unmarried man. At the Restoration in 1660, he lost his Fellowship, and in 1662 his Vicarage also at Reading. He then retired to London and exercised his ministry in private there. In January 1676, he died in Southwark, aged 66 years. Mr. Cooper who preached his funeral sermon, gives him the character of "an able, holy, faithful, indefatigable servant of Christ, who approved himself such by painful studies, by patient sufferings, and by continual prayer and preaching. He was quick in apprehension, solid in his notions, clear in his conceptions, sound in the faith, strong and demonstrative in argument, mighty in convincing, and zealous for the truth against all errors. He had a singular gift in chronology, not for curious speculation or ostentation, but as a key and measure to know the signs of the times, and the fulfilling of prophecies relating to the kingdom of Christ and antichrist; the exaltation of the one and the ruin of the other; wherein he was not rash or peremptory, but sober, walking by line and rule."

He died at Reading, and the early records say that there is a stone in the meeting which mentions his having been pastor and the period of his labours. This stone is now no where to be found, but it is presumed that it must have perished at the time of rebuilding the Chapel. The spirit that cleared the grave stones of the Covenanters from moss, and saved them from obliteration, would have bitterly regretted that such a memorial should have been suffered to die.

The REV. SAMUEL DOOLITTLE was chosen co-pastor with Mr. Juice. Wilson in his antiquities of the London Dissenting Churches, says "this excellent and useful minister was son to the famous Rev. Thomas Doolittle, ejected from St. Alphage, London Wall. He was born about the time the Act of Uniformity took place, by which his father and about two thousand more worthy ministers were thrown out of their livings, because they would not violate their consciences, by complying with the unjust dictates of an arbitrary court, to the great disgrace of the Church, and almost utter ruin of religion in this kingdom. Mr. Doolittle received his education under his father, who kept an academy at Islington, for training young men to the ministry. There he had for his fellow stu-

dents the well known Mr. Matthew Henry of Chester, Mr. Samuel Bury of Bristol, and Mr. Henry Chandler of Bath, all eminent ministers among the dissenters. Mr. Doolittle's advantages in receiving his education under the immediate eye of his father, were no doubt of a distinguished nature, and qualified him in a peculiar manner for the ministerial office."

Having laid in a good foundation of human learning and divine knowledge, he commenced his public work by statedly assisting the Rev. John Turner, who was ejected from Sunbury, in Middlesex, and afterwards had a private congregation in Fetter lane. At the same time he assisted his father at his meeting-house in Monkswell street; from whence he removed about the year seventeen hundred, to take the charge of a congregation at Reading, in Berkshire, where he finished his course April the tenth, seventeen hundred and seventeen, aged about fifty-five years. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. James Waters, of Uxbridge, from the words "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. iii. 3. The following extract from it will give us some idea of Mr. Doolittle's amiable character.

"I have been intimately acquainted with him,"

says Mr. Waters, "for above seven and thirty years; and therefore what I shall say of him, will not be the reports of others, but what I know to be true. When he was in his nineteenth year, which was the first part of our acquaintanceship, I had reason to think that he had a serious sense of true godliness, and a love to it; and I knew that he kept up constant communion with God in secret, as became one who was earnest to work out his own salvation. He was a diligent reader and studier of God's word; not only for his own improvement in grace, but that he might also from thence be enabled to instruct and edify others. For he had early resolved to devote himself to the sacred work of the ministry, as soon as the divine providence should give him opportunity, and a clear call thereto. How industriously he laboured in his office, when solemnly invested with it, is well known to many in other towns, who have cause to bless God for his labours amongst them. You that are here present can witness also, how laborious he was amongst you for some years, in preaching, and in instructing the younger in a catechetical method to your great satisfaction and spiritual improvement. And I hope there are still among you, many seals of his

ministry, who will be his joy and crown in the day of Christ. His ministerial abilities I am sure were very great; and I had as fair an opportunity of knowing them as any other. He had the whole body of divinity in his head, and was well skilled in most of the nicest controversies of religion, having well studied them. His manner of delivery, in explaining and applying divine truths I need not mention, seeing yourselves were so deeply affected therewith, and thought yourselves happy in enjoying his useful labours.

“And whereas some few amongst you suspected the soundness of his judgment, as to some of the points controverted between the Calvinists on the one side and the Arminians on the other, as if he somewhat leaned to the latter; I must deal very plainly and candidly with you; I have had frequent converse with him about those matters, and therefore may be supposed to be well acquainted with his true thoughts in reference thereunto. I do therefore solemnly declare, that he did not incline to any one of the Arminian doctrines that were condemned in the famous synod of Dort. As to the extent of Christ’s death, he was of the same mind with Bishop Davenant, Dr. Twisse, Amyraldus, Mr. Claude, and many other learned divines,

who were strenuous opposers of the Remonstrants: and therefore those that censured betrayed either their ignorance or ill nature. For if we be prejudiced against one another, about doubtful points of religion, in which learned and good men entertain different sentiments, or use a different manner of expression, there must be either a weak head or a corrupt heart, which makes men judge of truth by a party, and offer a sacrifice of peace thereto.

“This leads me to the dark part of his life, I mean his decayed and sickly constitution; which was in part caused by the unjust prejudices some entertained against him, and the unhappy and unreasonable feuds which arose among yourselves. These things made too great an impression upon his spirit, and caused a very great increase of his hypochondriac melancholy, which the neglect of exercise had already brought him into. Thus that life which might have been further useful to yourselves and others, received so violent a shock, that death made very sensible advances towards him, and at length landed him in the invisible world.”

Mr. Doolittle published “The righteous man’s hope at Death, considered and improved for the

comfort of dying christians, and the support of surviving relations. To which is added, death-bed reflections proper for a righteous man in his last sickness;" on Prov. xiv. 32. This was the first sermon preached by the author after the death of his mother, Mrs. Mary Doolittle, who died Dec. 16, 1692; and was published with enlargements. It is dedicated to his five sisters, Mary Sheafe, Tabitha Hearne, Susanna Pool, Sarah Dawson and Martha Doolittle.

Mr. Doolittle was assisted for some time, and afterwards succeeded by

The Rev. GEORGE BURNETT. He was a native of Berwick-upon-Tweed, where he married. He preached for a time at Andover, which place he left to come to Reading, about the year seventeen hundred and fifteen. In the year seventeen hundred and thirty-nine, we find him engaged in giving the charge at the ordination of Dr. Cumming at Andover, according to the memorials of that Church lately published.

It is said that when he came to Reading, he was chosen only as assistant, but by some means caused himself to be considered as co-pastor, and at length supplanted Mr. Doolittle. A separation took place in the year seventeen hundred and

eighteen. These things perhaps explain the word "*feuds*" used by Mr. Waters. The separatists established a Presbyterian Church at a place in Sun Lane, (now King Street,) where they met for public worship.* The separation was attended with a law-suit, the cushion of the old pulpit having been claimed for the new, by a person named Sylvester, and it appears that fourteen pounds were paid to the poor of Sun Lane meeting as award money. The Rev. Geo. Burnett was very much afflicted with the gout, insomuch that he frequently went upon crutches into the pulpit. It is stated that in all probability it was this complaint that terminated his life, in the year seventeen hundred and forty, and in the twenty-fifth year of his labours in Reading. The record states that 'he was buried in the meeting

*The first Minister was Dr. Rigby, followed by the Revs. Messrs. Benson, Cooper, Kemp, Baker and Armstrong. The last named went to Bath after he retired, where he died. The Congregation afterwards removed to Salem Court, Minster Street, where it was dissolved and the place sold. Only a few of the members returned to Broad Street. The Chapel was bought in eighteen hundred and eight, refitted, and called Salem, for the use of a second congregation, formed of separatists from the congregation in Castle Street. The first Minister was the Rev. Thos. Wood, afterwards of Jewin Street, London. The second, the Rev. Thos. Perrott, who went to Plymouth. This chapel is now in the possession of the Primitive Methodists.

and has a stone.' The only stone, however, which can now be found, is that which records the death of his wife, in the year seventeen hundred and forty-four, in the sixty-fourth year of her age.

It is to be hoped that more care will be taken by ourselves and successors of these relics of an elder time. But still

“Worn on the edge of days the brass consumes,
The busto moulders, and the deep-cut marble,
Unsteady to the steel, gives up its charge.”

The REV. JOHN BURNETT, son of the preceding, succeeded his father in the same year that he died. He preached among the people at Reading about six years, to the year seventeen hundred and forty-six. Several of his hearers grew very much dissatisfied with him as a preacher; they carried their opposition to such an extent, that his removal seemed the only course to be adopted. In the year mentioned above he left his charge at Reading, and went to Witham in Essex, and from thence he removed to Hull, where he preached for some years, till death put an end to his ministerial career.

The REV. EVAN JONES, from Spaldwick in Huntingdonshire, came to settle at Reading in the

room of the Rev. John Burnett, at Michaelmas in the year seventeen hundred and forty-eight. On Wednesday, May the seventeenth, seventeen hundred and forty-nine, he was ordained to the pastoral office. Dr. Guyse preached on the occasion from the text, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Acts ix. 31. Mr. Mitchell and others officiated on the occasion. The congregation either built or bought a parsonage-house for him and his successors, giving indication that the ordination text was something like prophetic, as it is only when the inner life of a church is vigorous, that such efforts are put forth in behalf of those who are daily spending and being spent, to present them perfect in Christ Jesus. Another sign of a right spirit we find in the fact, that the Lectures on Lord's day evenings, were preached at Broad Street by Mr. Jones and the Rev. Mr. Whitewood, the Baptist Minister,*

* The records of the Baptist place of worship go back to sixteen hundred and fifty-six. The first data refer to some minute directions given to the members. This church is one of the earliest in the kingdom, and the chapel was in Hosier Street. Mr. John Rance was

alternately. Things at length began to change. Some uneasiness was occasioned in the church by a deficiency in the accounts of those who managed their pecuniary affairs. About the year seventeen hundred and sixty-three, there was an opposition created by some of the people to Mr. Jones, and it arose so high between him and one of the deacons (Mr. Winship by name) that at the table of the Lord, the pastor would not give him the elements of bread and wine to hand to the communicants, nor would the deacon take them but from his hand. In the church-book there is the devout aspiration—"May the christian church never again witness that or any other such unchristian sight!" At Lady-day, old style, seventeen hundred and sixty-four, Mr. Jones left Reading to settle at Little Baddow, in Essex; previous to which on Lord's day evening, April first, seventeen hundred and sixty-four, he preached his farewell sermon at Broad Street, from II Cor.

the first pastor in sixteen hundred and sixty-eight. In sixteen hundred and ninety-five, being old he was assisted by five deacons, one of whom was Mark Key, afterwards of Devonshire Square Chapel, London. The second pastor was Mr. J. Davis, who was succeeded by the Revs. P. Belbin, Thomas Flower, Daniel Turner, (1749) Thomas Whitewood, Thomas Davis, John Holloway, (1814) John Dyer, J. H. Hinton, J. Statham, and J. J. Brown.

xiii. 11. "Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." This sermon was "printed and sold by S. Blackman, in Fisher Row," and now lies before the writer. The discourse displays considerable ability in analyzing the state of the Corinthian church. He in effect shows, that the disorders that sometimes manifest themselves in our own churches, are no argument against their pretensions to the primitive model, inasmuch as the Church at Corinth, though planted by Paul and watered by Apollos, fell into practices, and for a time maintained them, which are rarely if ever tolerated in modern times. A very important suggestion for the days in which we live, when the unphilosophical course is pursued, of condemning our churches altogether, because they furnish occasional examples of distraction and division; as if the issuing of counterfeits did not prove the intrinsic value of the genuine coin. There may be other institutions calling themselves Churches of Christ, that exhibit a greater degree of apparent peace, but it may be the peace of the grave—a tranquility in which

thought and opinion, and the free spirit of man are overlaid by the influence of authority.

It was upon the distracted and unhealthy state of the Corinthian Church the Apostles' exhortations were founded. "Exhortations which," says Mr. Jones to the Church at Reading, "I would now, as your departing minister, most earnestly recommend to your future attention. I have, believe me! a very hearty, sincere concern for your welfare. As I am now therefore, (after having laboured amongst you a very considerable number of years,) to break off all further connexion with you as your teacher and pastor in the Lord, though I bless my God, not from any criminal, immoral behaviour,—permit me to exhort you in this my last and farewell sermon, *to be perfect, to be of good comfort, to be of one mind, and to live in peace.*" The sermon throughout manifests great fidelity and affection, and breathes on the whole a good spirit; though the mental torture through which, as a warm Welshman, his opponents had made him pass, betrays itself in one part of the following peroration, as he glances at the unkind treatment he had met with.

He thus concludes. "My dear people, let me

once more recommend these very salutary admonitions to your most serious, most diligent attention. This is the last time I shall ever have an opportunity of addressing you from this pulpit as your stated pastor. The star of my ministry *here* is for ever set. After this Sabbath, I shall no longer be your watchman to admonish, your guide to conduct you, your shepherd to feed you, your counsellor to advise you. Oh! therefore excuse, I beseech you, my pressing importunity; and suffer once more this word of friendly exhortation: "*Live in peace,*" and may the God of love and peace be with you, and bless you all! May the christian society which usually assembles in this place of worship, be crowned with a plentiful and constant increase of spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,—may the voice of strife and animosity be heard no more amongst you,—but for gentleness, and love, and mutual harmony, and for every christian virtue, may you from this time forwards, bear an honourable and distinguished name amongst the thousands of Israel.

"As to those contentious, unhappy men who have lately disturbed our peace, and either by their open or by their secret attacks upon my

comfort, my reputation, and my usefulness, been the real and the only occasion of our parting—I pray God to forgive them! May they live and be happy; and oh! may they live to repent. May the Almighty condescend in mercy to endow each of them with that truly humble, that peaceable, that gentle, that loving, and that upright disposition of mind, which is indispensably necessary to qualify us for the *gracious* presence of the God of love and peace in this world, and for his *glorious* presence in that which is to come! Even so, Lord Jesus, for thy mercy's sake. Amen and Amen."

The Rev. Stephen Morell of Little Baddow, Essex,* states that Mr. Jones succeeded to the pulpit of the congregational church in that village

* In sixteen hundred and sixty-two, Mr. Oakes was ejected from Boreham in Essex. The village of Little Baddow is situated on the opposite side of the stream that separates the two parishes. That little stream has often witnessed the preaching of the gospel on its banks by Mr. Oakes, whose preaching was with much affection. A church was formed in Little Baddow in sixteen hundred and sixty-eight, of which he was the pastor. The congregation met in a farm-house, occupied by one of the tenants of Lord Barrington until seventeen hundred and seventeen, when his lordship erected and slightly endowed the present place. Lord Barrington was a great friend to nonconformity in Essex, indeed, without his munificent aid, very many of the nonconformist churches in that county could never have existed.

in seventeen hundred and sixty-four, and remained there till his death. Mr. Parry is mentioned as his successor in seventeen hundred and eighty one. One of the sacramental cups at present in use in that interesting and ancient church, has his name engraved upon it, bearing the date of seventeen hundred and sixty-six. Mr. Morell further says, "when I came to Little Baddow in seventeen hundred and ninety-nine, he was then remembered at that distance of time, and spoken of by the people with great esteem."

The Rev. THOMAS NOON was the next pastor. He was educated at Mile End Academy, which was afterwards removed to Homerton. He came to Reading at Midsummer, seventeen hundred and sixty-four.

The following is the call which he received from the church, unexpectedly discovered by the Rev. J. Cumming of Hammersmith, related to Mr. Noon's family by marriage, who kindly forwarded this interesting document after these memorials had been compiled.

**"A CALL FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
; IN BROAD STREET, READING, TO THE
REV. MR. NOON.**

REV. SIR,

As we trust Providence has directed you to us, and we find by experience your preaching useful to our souls, and your labours in general highly acceptable to all the people, we give you, dear Sir, this unanimous invitation to settle amongst us to be our pastor; and we hope (as we believe it is the will of God) you will comply with our request. As there is a happy prospect of your success in the work of the Lord, and as you are endowed with gifts and graces for the ministerial function, and strictly adhere to the doctrines of the gospel of Christ, and by your christian conversation walk worthy of the Lord, therefore our hearts are united to you, and we sincerely wish, and earnestly pray, that the Lord would direct your way to us, and accept of our call, for this will yield us great satisfaction and joy. And we hope by the blessing of God, you will be the happy instrument of advancing the interest of Christ, and promoting our spiritual welfare, that so we may increase in faith and holiness, and many sinners may be converted, who shall be your joy in this life, and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we hope we shall all endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to make your life comfortable and happy amongst us, that you and we may mutually assist and help each other, in carrying on the work of the Lord."

He was ordained to the pastoral office in seventeen hundred and sixty-five. On that solemn occasion, Dr. Conder, Dr. Gibbons, Mr. Fowle of London and Mr. Williams of Maidenhead took the different parts of the service. A new trust was chosen for the meeting in seventeen hundred and sixty-seven. In May, seventeen hundred and ninety-five, after a ministry of more than thirty years among the same people, Mr. Noon was called to enter into the joy of his Lord, and his flock were again as sheep without a shepherd. A marble tablet was placed near the pulpit, as a tribute of affection from his family to his memory and ministry. Such is the statement which the church book supplies, but the writer feeling regret, that only so brief a notice should be preserved of a man, of whom he had heard as standing high in the esteem of all parties, ventured to write to his illustrious descendant, the Hon. Mr. Justice Talfourd, and was courteously favored with the following reply.

“ Russell Square, London,
2nd Nov. 1850.

My dear Mr. Legg.

“ I have delayed my reply to your inquiries respecting my grandfather until I could see my mother, and gather from her some particulars of his very uneventful life. As he died a week before my birth, I of course have no personal knowledge of his habits or history; and all my mother can tell of him may be comprised in a very few words.

Mr. Thomas Noon was a native of the town or neighbourhood of Stafford. His parents were decent people, but in humble life; and both died before he could know anything of their religious opinions. He was brought up by an uncle, some small farmer or tradesman of the same neighbourhood, and by him apprenticed for the usual term to a carpenter. It happened that during his apprenticeship, he was employed on some work which his master had undertaken at a country-seat of the celebrated Lady Huntingdon, and attracted her notice. He is said to have been a remarkably handsome lad, very thoughtful and modest, and the introduction for which he was probably indebted to his good looks, was followed

by an interest which his manners and conversation confirmed. Lady Huntingdon strongly urged him to become a minister of the connexion she was forming, and offered to send him to the university for that purpose ; but although he had imbibed a strong desire to be a minister, he steadfastly declined her offers, as his mind was fixed on the regular ministry of Independent dissent, as the sphere in which he could most conscientiously discharge the sacred duties he sought. He had before the incident which introduced him to the notice of Lady Huntingdon, been impressed with deep religious feelings by a sermon of Whitfield's, delivered in the neighbourhood of the place in which he was serving his apprenticeship, and to which he ascribes (as the means) the entire course of his spiritual life. He had received no religious instruction or impression before that memorable occasion ; nor did any event afterwards mould his intellectual history.

It was however some years after this that he became a student for the Independent Dissenting ministry, though, in the mean time, he had received many kindnesses from Lady Huntingdon, who even called him "her son," and offered to adopt him as such, if he would commit to her the

charge of his fortunes. He obtained at length admission to the Mile End Academy, under Dr. Conder, and served there another apprenticeship, for he lived there a student seven years. At the expiration of that time, he settled at Reading, and there lived, and preached, and died in the thirty-first year of his ministry, and the sixty-fourth of his age.

He was not a popular or attractive preacher, writing the whole of every sermon, and reading it carefully from his manuscript almost without action. He preached twice every Sunday, morning and afternoon, and every other Sunday in the evening, alternating that lecture with the Baptist minister, who preached on the alternate Sunday; both congregations being invited to attend each evening service. He also held service and preached on every Thursday evening. His Sunday morning and afternoon sermons were always *new ones*; but he used to own that the other discourses were brought out of his old treasury, which at the time of his death contained more than two thousand manuscript sermons. He used to say that the study and composition of two sermons were sufficient work for the week, and he could not attempt more. He was indeed a most

devoted student. The whole of Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday was spent in his study, which he rarely quitted on those days till eight in the evening when he regularly left it for the parlour. Monday he devoted to visiting his people in the town ; and Tuesday he always observed as a whole holiday, uniformly spending it in a long country walk, leaving home after breakfast, and not returning till the evening. He had friends at Whitley and Shinfield, whom he used on these occasions chiefly to visit.

Mr. Noon was twice married. By the first wife he had two sons and two daughters ; she died young, when her youngest child was a few weeks old. By the second wife he had no children ; and she only survived her marriage four years. His two daughters married members of his congregation. My mother, his eldest daughter, is the only one of his children now living. Both his marriages brought him some fortune ; so that during his long widowhood, he enjoyed the means of comfort independent of his salary. His temper was singularly placid, and he was never known by his family to have been engaged in one dispute or even controversy. He was held in great esteem by the clergy of the Church of England in Reading.

He visited London twice every year to receive his dividends. On the last occasion he was seized with a fit, when about to step into the Reading stage coach to return home, and conveyed insensible to the adjoining hotel. Thence he was removed to Reading; but he never recovered perfect consciousness, and died in a few days after his seizure.

These are all the particulars I have been able to obtain of my grandfather, whose pulpit you so worthily fill, and whose place I earnestly hope you may adorn for many years.

Believe me to remain,

My dear Mr. Legg,

Most truly yours,

T. N. TALFOURD."

"Rev. W. Legg."

Chapter Second.

FROM 1796 TO 1839.

Rev. Archibald Douglas—Born in London—His conversion—Enters Mile End Academy—Settles at Newmarket—Intercourse with Robert Hall—Removes to Reading—Originates a Sabbath School and the Reading Evangelical Society—His labours in the Villages—The building and opening of the new chapel on the site of the old one—Madam Ryder—Establishes a girls' day school—His devotion to his ministry and to all philanthropic objects—His character and death.

IN January seventeen hundred and ninety-six, the year after Mr. Noon's death, the Rev. Archibald Douglas, having resigned his charge over a church at Newmarket in Suffolk, came to settle at Reading. At his settlement the Rev. John Winter of Newbury preached from the words, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish." II Cor. ii. 15. It was printed by desire. The Rev. John Clayton of the Weigh-house, London, preached in the evening.

The Rev. George Clayton, A. M. of Walworth, son of the above, who had lived for some years

under Mr. Douglas' roof, while prosecuting his classical studies at Reading school, then rendered famous by the distinguished abilities of Dr. Valpy, published in the year eighteen hundred and forty, an elegant memoir of his early friend. In this production, filial reverence and affection beautifully blend with gratitude for kindness shown, and privileges enjoyed in early youth. Partly from this memoir, and partly from the personal intercourse of a co-pastorship extending over seven years, the following sketch is drawn.

The REV. A. DOUGLAS was born in London, in the year seventeen hundred and sixty-four, the same year that the Rev. Evan Jones resigned the pastorship of Broad Street. His parents were eminently pious, and gave him a good business education. He was first awakened to a sense of his sinfulness and danger, by a sermon preached in the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel, Spafford, by the Rev. Dr. Peckwell, a clergyman of the established church; by the preaching of the Rev. Timothy Priestly, a minister of Lady Huntingdon's connexion, he was introduced into the fulness of gospel light and liberty; by the clear and judicious statements of the Rev. J. Martin, the Baptist minister of Keppel Street, certain per-

plexing difficulties were cleared away from his mind ; and to the Rev. John Clayton, a congregational minister, whom he had chosen as his pastor, he was indebted for his establishment in the faith, and for his introduction into the work of the ministry. On this series of facts his biographer well remarks, that there should "assuredly be no feeling of distance, of jealousy, of contention, among those who are fellow-workers together with God, and are severally employed by one master, for one and the same high and holy purpose." A remark which has gained an additional force by the events of the last few weeks.* When the foundations are assailed afresh, all faithful ministers, and all the saints of God should attach themselves, by nearer and more sensible ties, to those who are like-minded with themselves. They should seek to each other for counsel and for comfort, for courage and for hope ; and thus present a better front against the hard hostile world, and the powers of ungodliness, by which their life-cherished principles are endangered. We, as a church, hold out the right hand of fellowship to all evangelical men.

* The Pope's Bull of 1850.

After having been for some time connected with business, Mr. Douglas felt a growing desire to become a minister; and having deliberated, hesitated, prayed, the way was opened for him into the Mile End Academy, the Rev. Dr. Addington being at that time professor of theology. When he had gone through his course of study, he settled over a christian church at Newmarket in Suffolk; where availing himself of the comparative leisure afforded by a small charge, he gave himself zealously to the cultivation of his intellect and heart. Here he laboured acceptably and usefully for six or seven years. Here also he enjoyed the friendship of the Rev. Robert Hall of Cambridge. Often has the writer heard him mention that high honour, especially when he met him year by year at a social party of ministers and others, held at the house of one of Mr. Noon's grand-children. The vivid recollection of Mr. Hall's influence on his mind and studies, used to kindle his fine open countenance with peculiar animation, as he would repeat the ever new, never uninteresting account of walks among the lanes and fields with that celebrated man. When Mr. Douglas came to Reading, the congregation had been reduced to a small number. Under his

zealous ministrations it revived. He began to give special attention to the young. Broad Street Sunday School was commenced in seventeen hundred and ninety-six, the first year of his ministry. It was the first of the kind in the town. It was kept in Duke's Head yard by Mr. Benjamin Chalk at a salary. The Girl's Sunday School was kept by Mrs. King, at Town's End, now Upper Friar Street. The schools contained about eighteen children in each. It was taught in the morning and afternoon in summer, and in the winter, morning and evening. Mr. Chalk was succeeded by Mr. Thos. Skinner, who taught the boys for some time, and then it was taken up by the voluntary consecration of pious persons connected with the church. A respected inhabitant of the town, who was the first boy that entered the school, has kindly furnished these facts. The school thus began has been maintained in great efficiency, and has always held a high position in the town in that class of agency. It has frequently been favoured with superintendents, both male and female, from the most influential persons of the congregation, always acting under the presidency of the pastor.

In the second year of his ministry, seventeen

hundred and ninety-seven, Mr. D. drew up a plan for village preaching, and induced the other dissenting congregations to unite in it, though at first the christian people who afterwards built Castle Street chapel, now St. Mary's chapel, and who were then about to leave St. Giles' church, could only unite by liberal contributions of money. When they had once seceded, from lack of evangelical preaching in their own parish church, they publicly united with Mr. Douglas and the other dissenters in the village preaching, and in all other labours of love.

The following is copied from the minute book.

"The agreement of the preachers engaged by the Reading Evangelical Society.

We, whose names are undersigned, do solemnly engage to aid each other in the work of our common Lord, by village preaching, under the direction of the Reading Evangelical Society. We disavow any intention of merely proselyting men to a sect, but in dependence on power from on high, we shall aim at bringing them to repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As harmony and love appear necessary to the success of our efforts, we declare our readiness to follow peace with all men, and especially to culti-

vate love among christians of the different denominations to which we respectively belong, not countenancing any comparisons, tending to depreciate any minister employed by the society, nor contending for the peculiarities of any party.

Signed :

ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS.

JOSEPH WALKER.

JOHN HOLLOWAY."

This society after many years of useful labour, was dissolved by the mutual consent of the three united congregations, each receiving a certain proportion of villages to cultivate, and by their several exertions, nine village chapels have been erected, and four preaching rooms kept open for divine service.

While Mr. Douglas had the honour of being the principal means of putting this hallowed machinery into operation, he was not for a single day unmindful of his own peculiar charge at Broad Street. Finding the congregation enlarged, and manifold duties pressing on him, he felt his responsibility to be so great, that, together with a mysterious domestic trial, to which it required the lapse of many years to inure him, the conscous-

ness of it preyed upon his nerves. None that knew him in after years, when his calmness and self-possession had become proverbial, would have been ready to believe, that about the time of which we now write, he was driven by low-spirited affections to the brink of agony. He told the writer that when these feelings came upon him, he used to ride to Mapledurham woods, where fastening his horse to a tree, he spent many hours in weeping and prayer, for himself, his afflicted partner, whose mind had become permanently eclipsed, and for the church and people entrusted to his care. When he went from home at any time with a brother minister for recreation, he would induce his companion to sit down with him on some grassy mound, and taking out his testament they would set to work, and exercise their ingenuity in constructing the plans of sermons. He devoted also the most of every afternoon to reading, seldom going out after one o'clock, except to the weekly services. His diligence and zeal were rewarded, and he and his friends felt themselves justified in commencing to build a new chapel. The old one which had been occupied by the first minister was heavy and incommodious, and entered by descending steps, was thrown down

and the present chapel erected on its site. It was constructed with a lantern roof, which, surmounting an elegant interior, had a very graceful effect. It was found however to make the chapel cold, and was therefore removed and the dome completed in its present form.

Before the interior was quite finished, about three thousand pounds had been paid by the congregation. Two hundred pounds were still wanted to finish the cappings of the pews, and some other small finishings, when at a meeting of the friends a resolution was passed, that Mr. Douglas should be requested to go out and collect the amount from other churches. He had a great repugnance to such work, but as the people had done nobly he bowed to their wishes. At the same meeting however it was debated, whether the cappings of the pews should be of mahogany or deal. It was resolved that they should be of the former, solid and massive. Upon which, Mr. D., with an archness peculiarly his own, said, "gentlemen, I am obliged to you for this resolution, it completely relieves me from a painful employment; for you cannot dress me in a laced coat and send me forth to beg." The point was effective. They admitted the full force of it, and

before the meeting broke up the two hundred pounds were subscribed.

No one has a right to object to a christian people adorning their place of worship, but certainly it must be wrong to appeal to christian benevolence for mere ornaments, when the decoration of many a chapel, would be sufficient to build another complete amid some benighted population.*

Of the large amount expended on the erection of the chapel, the sum of five hundred pounds was given by Mrs. Ryder, a distinguished lady connected by marriage with the noble houses of

* The Chapel was opened exactly fifty years since. In the Evangelical Magazine for 1801 we find this record.

"December 2nd. 1800, was opened a meeting-house in Broad Street, Reading, which will seat about seven hundred persons. Rev. Mr. Clayton of London, preached in the morning, from Luke vii. 5. Mr. Hinton of Oxford, in the afternoon, from Haggai ii. 9. Mr. Hughes of Battersea, in the evening from John ix. 27, latter part of the verse. Mr. Scholefield of Henley, Mr. Winter of Newbury, Mr. Thresher of Abingdon, Mr. Lovegrove of Wallingford, Dr. Davies of Reading, Mr. Jefferson of Basingstoke, and Mr. Cooke of Maidenhead offered up prayers on the occasion, and Mr. Douglas, the pastor of the church, gave out the hymns. The congregations were large, and the services both solemn and pleasant, many found their minds refreshed, and we trust the whole was attended with the peculiar presence of the Great Head of the Church.

It is with the highest satisfaction we add, that the Lord has awakened among the people a spirit of liberality, that they might honourably defray every expense without delay, or without any application to other churches."

Hawkesbury and Beaufort, who also endowed the place with a small portion of her property. The endowment was augmented by the kindness of another christian lady, Miss Chinnor, and some other friends. Madam Ryder, as she was commonly called, had been converted to God from a life of worldliness and vanity by the private ministrations of Mr. Douglas, who, on visiting her in sickness, as one of his hearers, simply said respecting her afflictions, "These are warnings Madam." The Spirit blessed the expression, and she became a devoted christian and a great blessing to the place. It may here be noticed, that Mr. D. did not give a great deal of time to visiting, except to the sick. He thought it better to be well prepared for the pulpit, as the principal duty of his ministry. With the sick he was faithful and tender, as a father among his children. The writer has gone with him to call on backsliders, and with them, nothing could be more solemn and affecting, than his appeals and his prayers.

In the year eighteen hundred and two, Mr. Douglas' zeal for the young displayed itself in the establishment of the Broad Street Girls' Day School, an institution from which hundreds of

girls have derived, and still continue to derive, incalculable benefits. Great care has been taken in the formation of religious character. Of this school the pastor has always been president and secretary. In its formation, Mr. Douglas was assisted by Mrs. Davies, wife of the Rev. Dr. Davies, formerly of Fetter Lane, London; Mrs. Field, Mrs. Ryder, Miss Trotman, and Mrs. Macalister, in conjunction with the rest of the ladies connected with the church. The first treasurer was Mrs. Field, and the next was Mrs. Macalister. This lady paid particular attention to the personal appearance of the scholars. On admission they had to appear before her, and the first thing was to deprive them of their curls, enforcing excessive neatness, but tolerating nothing that she deemed fitted to foster the vanity of the youthful mind. Mrs. Macalister lived to be venerable for her years as well as her piety, her interest in the school never flagging; and she continued, after she was long past eighty years of age, to cut out the garments for clothing the school girls with her own hands.

She was succeeded by Miss Sarah Hall, who amid much bodily affliction, greatly exerted herself for the prosperity of the school, till she was

called to enter into rest. The next treasurer who continued till her death, was Miss Jones, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Jones, of Lady Glenorchy's, Edinburgh. Miss Jones, with a deportment the most meek and gentle, exerted a very happy influence over the girls, by the simple power of goodness, against which the most thoughtless had no power to rebel. The present treasurer is Miss A. B. Stiff.

At the commencement of the school, Mr. Douglas issued the following address:—

“In all civilized states the education of children has occupied no inconsiderable place. In our happy isle, there is a great number of excellent institutions where knowledge is freely imparted. Multitudes of the lower class have derived great advantage from the establishment of Sunday Schools; but admirable as the plan is, it extends not to some particulars which are truly important—in the instruction of females, whether we view them first as domestic servants, or subsequently as wives. The poor girl whose disposition and manners have never been regulated, and who is incapable of reading and using her needle, can afford the prospect of but little that is promising in either capacity. Many of the

complaints in families and in society must be attributed to this neglect, and, at the same time, the necessity of providing a remedy is obvious.

By these considerations, a number of benevolent ladies have been induced to open a charity school for females, where the girls might be formed for situations in families, by instruction and the impartation of religious principles."

The following is the first Rule.

"The objects of the charity are girls of indigent parents, without distinction of parties, who are to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic, plain knitting, needlework, and cleaning the school-room. They will also be instructed in the principles of Christianity, and attend every Lord's day at Broad Street Chapel. None to be admitted under eight years of age, nor to be continued more than four years. The number of the children not to exceed thirty."

It may be proper to state, that although the subscribers to this school are in general Protestant Dissenters, and the children are required to attend with the governess at Broad Street meeting, yet it proceeds upon such liberal principles, that a far greater number of the girls are belonging to families which attend at their parish churches, and

other places of worship; nor are there any principles inculcated to make them hostile to any one denomination in the christian church.

Upon this broad scale of christian charity this school has been founded, and is now conducted; it therefore claims the sanction and support of all benevolent persons, without party distinction.

Some of the ladies we have mentioned left a few pounds a year to the school, but it mainly depends on voluntary contribution.

Since its commencement many admirable characters have been formed in it, and many have joined different sects in the church of Christ, owing in a great degree to the fact, that it partakes more of the character of a well-regulated domestic circle, than is practicable in larger schools. At the same time the ministers and people of the chapel have taken their full share in forming and supporting the British Schools, and that on the infant system.

Mr. Douglas' church was from time to time strengthened by the accession of various persons of property and influence, a circumstance to which many causes contributed. Among these may be mentioned his own high character for worth and judicious ministrations. The town

itself always strikes a stranger as "beautiful for situation," and it has long enjoyed the reputation of being one of the healthiest inland towns in England. Numbers of retired persons from London have been in the habit of settling in it in the decline of life, as being at a convenient distance from the sources of their property, and not too near their former circles of friends, when they want to enjoy their ease rather than the excitement of company. Among those who thus came to sweeten the pastoral life of Mr. D., were the Rev. Dr. Davies of Fetter Lane, the Rev. William Kingsbury of Southampton, and a gentleman who had long and honourably filled the office of deacon under the former, and his successor, the sainted George Burder. With some of these Mr. Douglas enjoyed for many years, without omitting one, an annual visit to the sea till the time of his death, invariably leaving home on the Monday after the first Lord's day in August. To this regularity in company, so fitted to soothe him, he was doubtless indebted for much of the good health he enjoyed, and the efficiency thence resulting.

While he was labouring in the church, converting not a few souls, building up many for

glory, and gathering around him faithful and pleasing friends, he was not indifferent to the general movements of society. He was in fact forward to every good work. He assisted at the formation of the Literary Institution, and knowing how much immorality and misery result from unthrifty habits among the poor, he strenuously promoted the establishment of the Savings Bank. He was the first dissenting secretary of the Reading Auxiliary Bible Society, itself the first in the kingdom, the Rev. George Hulme being his clerical co-adjutor, who made a very gratifying and pathetic allusion to their long and harmonious co-operation, at the first anniversary after his death. The honor also was conferred on Mr. D., of being the first Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. The present writer was often struck with the elasticity of his mind when he had become an old man, enabling him to take part in whatever was interesting to his younger brethren. The emancipation of the slaves, and the agitation for the redress of the Dissenters' grievances had his full sympathy, and terse and pointed speeches. He had indeed a thorough dislike to long speeches, and his sermons and addresses as spoken had this peculiarity, that they

were more condensed than his written style. In home and foreign missions he felt and cherished to the last a very lively interest. He was one of the first to respond to Dr. Bogue's memorable letter, that led to the formation of the London Missionary Society, and he attended the first meeting of town and country ministers at the Castle and Falcon, Aldersgate Street, whence issued the glorious machinery, that has worked so long, and still works so well, in assailing the kingdom of darkness throughout the world. Shrewd, upright, conscientious and penetrating, Mr. Douglas maintained through life the character of a first class committee-man thus auspiciously begun. Although in the noble band, the fathers and founders of that society—men whose fair fame Dr. Morison has done so much to uphold, there were minds of great individual energy, yet the feeling then began to grow into belief, that the world was to be enlightened and saved by the continually decreasing power of individual, and the as constantly augmenting power of associated minds. The sense of separate weakness, became to them the secret of collective strength. Mr. Douglas was fitted for the age of societies, and there was not a committee formed in Reading for

the redress of any oppression ; or for the cure of any sorrow by which our race can be visited ; or for the diffusion of any blessing of which mankind can partake in common, of which he was not chosen a member.

On several of these Committees he co-operated most cordially with various Clergymen of the Church of England, and indeed soon after the commencement of his ministry at Reading, he enjoyed the confidence of one of the most distinguished Clergymen ever connected with the town. We refer to the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan. That Clergyman, says his biographer, "visited Mr. D. at his own house, and greatly strengthened and encouraged him in the work of the Lord. He knew that he was a Protestant Dissenter from conviction, but believed him to be a servant of Christ, working the work of an evangelist, as he also did, and therefore gave to him the right hand of fellowship, and bade him God-speed. That such a man of noble birth and blood, and highly gifted in his profession, in the zenith too of his well-earned popularity and extensive usefulness, with a church always full to overflowing, should thus have encouraged the newly settled pastor of a non-conforming society, affords, in these days of

separation, a lively and refreshing spectacle. Oh that this pure spirit of Catholic Christianity, descending from the Romaines, the Shirleys, the Venns, the Newtons, the Cecils, the Scotts, and the Cadogans of a former age, may rest in an abundant measure upon their successors !”

Amid all these duties he preached for the space of thirty-one years three times every sabbath, and once in the week, besides attending the prayer meetings where he often gave a brief exposition after several of the brethren had prayed. To the praying brethren he used to say, “We do not want to limit you if you feel that your mind is drawn out by the Spirit of God ; but as a general rule the short prayer is the most edifying.”

Persons of solid judgment and large experience delighted in the ministry of Mr. Douglas, but there was something in the exceeding plainness of his language, and a certain want of animation in his delivery, which was rendered less fluent by an affection of his throat, brought on by exposure after preaching in one of the villages in a cold November night, that rendered his ministrations less attractive to strangers and less thoughtful hearers ; yet none even of those, if they con-

tinued to hear him for any length of time, but became interested in him, and often strongly attached to him, from the unction that rested on his spirit, and the singleness of purpose he displayed. Strong sense, consistent piety, distinguished prudence, and a perseverance that refused to be wearied out, all adorned by a spotless reputation, made Mr. Douglas a man beloved and venerated by all.

The following account of his last days is taken from the pen of his much esteemed biographer.

“For the last year or two, the beloved and faithful shepherd had been the subject of occasional indisposition of body, and more than once had suffered from acute inflammation of the chest, inducing a great tenderness of the lungs, and peculiar susceptibility of cold. Intimations, by no means equivocal, were apparent, that before long he must put off the tabernacle of mortal flesh. In January, eighteen hundred and thirty-nine, he was laid aside by a complaint resembling influenza. His nights were restless, his appetite failed him, his breathing was considerably embarrassed, and though exempt from violent pain, he was regarded by his friends, more perhaps than by himself, in a critical and dangerous state.

From the nature of his disease, he spoke very seldom, and with much difficulty ; this occasioned him, during a great part of his last illness, almost to dwell in silence. He seemed indeed to shrink, for the most part, from the effort necessary to free conversation. Disease had greatly enfeebled the power of articulation, and rendered its exercise painful. He was not, however, deterred from addressing suitable words to the few individuals who had the privilege of visiting him. To his colleague, on his first visit to him, after he had taken to his bed, he remarked, ' I am lying here, waiting to see what the Lord intends to do with me. Wearisome nights are appointed unto me, but I know who has appointed them ;' at another time, ' I have had such views of the glory of my Redeemer's person and cross, since I have been lying here, as I never had before.' He continued to manifest a deep spirit of devotion with his family, till he was no longer able to direct their thoughts at the mercy seat.

In one of his last prayers with his household, his desires were enlarged in a remarkable degree. He prayed for all the members of the church, and for the whole world. And when imploring a blessing for his own family, he was overcome by

the power of irrepressible emotion. He prayed that his upper servant, long valued for her fidelity and attachment to his interests, might be blessed and preserved, and might ever retain towards his dear afflicted wife, whom he was about to leave without his protection, all that tenderness and affection which she had ever shown, remembering that she would be doing service to one of the redeemed. His undisturbed composure was remarked by all who saw him. In an early stage of his sickness, when suffering much, it being the morning of the sabbath, his sister said to him, 'I cannot think of leaving you, while you are in such distress;' to which he replied, 'By no means remain here,' quoting the lines of Dr. Watts:—

"In every new distress,
We'll to thy house repair."

At this time he had not entirely relinquished the hope of again appearing in the pulpit, and remarked, 'Though I suffer—Father, glorify thy name. I will preach on that text, if ever I preach again! But my will is swallowed up in God's will, if he is glorified, I am satisfied. While here, I wish to show that there is a reality in the Gospel which I have preached to others.

It is a tried stone on which I have built, and able to sustain every pressure. I am not anxious to know the result of my affliction if God is but glorified.' His faith continued stedfast unto the end. When a near relative saw him in great suffering, she said, with a tone of earnestness, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' He rejoined, 'Don't say so; the Lord's time is the best.' To another, he said, 'Do you think I am now dying?' 'I fear you are.' 'Fear,' he exclaimed, 'why do you fear? that is what I am waiting for!' His friend enquired, 'Is Jesus precious to your soul?' 'Yes, I cannot distrust him. The thought of continuing here, is much more painful than that of dying.' When his last Sabbath on earth was drawing nigh, he observed, 'How delightful would it be, having been detained so many Sabbaths from the Lord's house, to begin my next Sabbath in heaven!' Perceiving some of his friends about him, he said, 'There—I will preach the gospel to you once more, 'Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.' In this blessed frame of mind he remained until he obtained his release.

One of the deacons of the church, to whom he entrusted the arrangement of his affairs, having

received from his lips some directions which were soon despatched, writes,—‘ These matters disposed of, he turned with all that deep-felt seriousness which an approaching eternity produces, to his own immediate position, and much, very much was I struck with his deep humiliation before God; his filial submission to the divine will, and his manifest desire that the glory of God might be promoted by the circumstances in which he was placed. He observed, ‘ It is my particular wish that nothing may be said commendatory of me, for on the review of the past, I find so much that has been defective in my duties and motives, that I can only say, God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ Referring to the possibility of recovery, he said, ‘ I only wish that it may be according to the will of God.’ But what most impressed my mind, was the emphatic manner in which he expatiated on the sublime glories of the Gospel. ‘ Since lying on this bed of affliction, and meditating on the gospel which I have long preached, I find in it such increasing, such inexpressible glories, that it appears to me, that heaven itself cannot be more full of glory, than is God’s redeeming plan of mercy—the glorious Gospel!’ ”

He died in peace on the twenty-sixth of

March, eighteen hundred and thirty-nine, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the forty-third of his ministry.

An elegant mural tablet, of white marble, was placed to his memory on the right hand of the pulpit, bearing the following inscription :—

IN MEMORY OF
THE REV. ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS,
WHO, AFTER HAVING FOR 43 YEARS
DISCHARGED WITH FIDELITY
THE DUTIES OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE
TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING
IN THIS PLACE;
ENTERED INTO REST 26TH MARCH, 1839,
IN HIS 75TH YEAR.

“BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT, WHOM HIS LORD, WHEN HE COMETH,
SHALL FIND SO DOING.”

The remembrance of his worth will long continue to be cherished by a numerous circle of attached friends, who can never forget his “work of faith and labour of love.”

Chapter Third.

FROM 1823 TO 1829.

The co-pastorships—Observations upon connections of that nature—
Letter from the Rev. Mr. Stamper—Thomas Chivers Everett—
Educated at Highbury College—Settlement at Reading—A noble
act—His great devotedness—Early death of his first wife, and
close of his ministry at Reading, in consequence of declining
health—Visits France—His death—Summary of his character.

The Co-Pastorships.

SIXTEEN years before his death, Mr. Douglas feeling that from various causes he was barely equal to the manifold duties of his office, intimated that he should like to have assistance, and that if the Church and himself should find a young man, in whom they could both unite, he would be ready to receive him as a co-pastor. This leads us to a point in our history confessedly surrounded with some difficulties. Many have supposed that there is something in our system inherently averse to co-pastorships. The acknowledged equality in the standing of all our min-

isters—there being no shadow of hierarchial distinctions or dignities, but only such as superior years, or wisdom, or piety, or talents may have conferred, it has been thought impossible that two ministers can be over the same church, without coming into frequent and painful collision. And the mournful failure of some remarkable modern instances seems to sanction the apprehension. It is thought too that a schism in the church and congregation is almost inevitable. The persons who have grown up under the ministry of the senior pastor, and have begun to grow old along with him, are in many cases almost unduly attached to him. They have no power to transfer their affections, even if it would not be wrong to do so, and they think it the next thing to sacrilege, even to share them with the new comer. On the other hand, the younger portion of the flock, attracted by the animation and more modern style of the young minister, consider him as specially theirs. Jealousies and heartburnings and invidious comparisons follow, and it is well if it does not end in an explosion, shattering the society into fragments, and dashing them against one another. Now, though this sorrowful spectacle may have been presented, appalling the hearts of aged ministers,

who feel their strength failing, and are looking forward with sad forebodings to the time, when they must either retire, perhaps unprovided for, into obscurity, or have their latter days embittered by the clash of contending interests, the writer humbly submits, that such a scene need never be witnessed by our churches. He is not able to record the views of his predecessor on this subject, whose character he has attempted to sketch in the following pages, because on the state of his sentiments and feelings respecting it, much reserve has been maintained, only that some of his letters mention his co-pastor with great respect. But for himself, the present writer can speak with great frankness, that during a life in which, though sore and agonizing sorrows have had their share, happiness has greatly preponderated, the seven years of co-pastorship were far from being the least happy. He would not refer to personal matters now, were it not with the hope that his experience might be a guide to some young minister, who may be called to occupy a similar post.

He proceeded then from the first upon two principles :—the first was, that no aged man, and especially no aged minister, likes to be of less con-

sequence than he ever has been; and the second, that no young minister can ever be degraded, in any question not involving conscience, by yielding his opinion to an old one. These two principles, simple as they may seem, are like other simple laws, mighty for good, in maintaining harmonious co-operation. It is for the most part from little things that all the dreaded contentions arise, and observing these two principles, a junior co-paster may with undeviating firmness upon every thing essential, combine the most yielding facility upon all that is unimportant. It is not to be concealed that the position is a delicate one, and no young minister ought to undertake to fill it, unless he has accomplished by the grace of God what Lord Lyndhurst did by moral discipline alone. When that distinguished lawyer had to endure night after night in the house of Lords, the scorching torrents of Lord Brougham's invective, poured like boiling lava on his head, he sat with the most perfect self-possession, and arose to rebut all his arguments with the same calmness and gentleness of tone, as if he had been addressing ladies in a drawing-room. When asked by a friend how he could restrain his spirit under such severity of sarcasm, he replied, "It is the result of an old

habit. When I entered on public life, I determined never to take a brief in the hope of conquering any antagonist, till I had first conquered myself." No man ought to be a minister, and especially a co-pastor, till he has attained to this degree. It is better than any honours in arts or theology that the schools can confer. It is not to be inferred from these cautions, that the writer had much to bear with from his venerated friend; on the contrary, any misunderstanding was quite the exception and not the rule, and that excellent man when dying, clasped him to his bosom, and as his last request desired him to deliver the funeral address at his grave. All that is meant is, that the two principles saved the senior from much uneasiness, and himself from annoyance from things, which when looked back upon through the shadowy light of the sepulchre, seem trifles light as air.

The REV. T. G. STAMPER was the first who came to assist Mr. Douglas. On the application of the writer to obtain some particulars of his residence in Reading, he received from Mr. Stamper the following reply.

“ Uxbridge, Nov. 26, 1850.

My dear Sir.

I have nothing particular to record with reference to Broad Street Chapel, except the fact of my assisting the Rev. Mr. Douglas for nearly two years. Mr. Darvall, one of the members of the church, was visiting Andover, when I happened to be sent from the college at Gosport to preach at the Independent Chapel in that town. I soon afterwards received a letter from Reading, inviting me to spend two Sabbaths there. This was the autumn of eighteen hundred and twenty-three, and this led to my engagement to assist Mr. Douglas for one year. At the end of that time I was requested to remain, which I consented to do for another year, at the expiration of which, I received an invitation to Uxbridge, which led to my settlement here.”

Mr. Stamper was useful in Reading to many, especially among the young, and the church at Uxbridge has flourished much under his ministry.

It was in the month of May, and in the year of grace, eighteen hundred and twenty-six, that a young man of grave and abstracted, yet youthful countenance,—pallid and somewhat fallen

from the salient outline that should bespeak his actual years, entered the town of Reading, and ascended the pulpit of Broad Street Chapel. All were arrested with the intensity of the fire in his large and blue, but somewhat sunken eye. What fixedness of purpose in the lips, and, when visiting the houses of his hearers, the movements of the youth seemed inspirited by some intention beyond simple locomotion, or mechanical agency. As he walked, one would imagine that he was hastening onward by the side of an invisible competitor for a prize at the goal. Or hear him speak; he is terse and precise: his tones too have a certain mystic solemnity, in place of the natural modulations of a voice so young. But listen to his opinions respecting these pastoral visitations, how vehement are they; his motto is "the sick before the healthy, the poor before the rich!" How far from *youthful*, and how far even from common is such a course; and not a look, not a word, not an action of his belongs to the level of ordinary sympathies. His feeling of responsibility is profound as the abyss; his aim to accomplish his functions, lofty as the skies. It was THOMAS CHIVERS EVERETT, a student from the Dissenting College at Highbury. Apart from

his high ministerial qualifications, he started in Reading under an impression the most favourable, produced by an act of moral heroism, which all could admire, but which few have ever been found to imitate. His father had died insolvent, and afterwards his uncle died leaving to the subject of this notice a considerable amount of property, the bulk of which he at once devoted to pay his father's debts. He owed nothing to his father's creditors, but he felt that he owed everything to his memory, and the sum of ten thousand pounds was without a sigh, devoted to the liquidation of every claim, leaving for himself a mere fraction of the money he had heired. He had many calculating and prudential advisers that argued against a sacrifice so costly, but his verdict was inexorable; it was to his mind "an act of the plainest duty," and it was done. The christian people at Broad Street felt that no common man was within their reach. He was called the same year to the co-pastorate, and ordained on the seventeenth of July in the year following. The Rev. William Harris, now the efficient secretary and honoured father of the Association, preached the introductory Sermon. Mr. Douglas offered the Ordination Prayer, the Charge was delivered by Dr.

William Harris, and the evening Sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas Adkins of Southampton.

The whole life of this admirable young man is a study for every stage of existence through which he passed. As a child at home he was sedate, retiring and studious; as a youth at school, he drew from one of the most distinguished preceptors of this age, Mr. Bullar of Southampton, a testimonial of conduct so uniformly good, that his example had become a thing of influence, as powerful over the youthful community as the authority of the master itself; so that in writing to his uncle the latter informed him, that a line of Pope's had become identified in his mind with the character of this boy:

"Go, spotless honour! go, untainted truth!"

As a student at college, he was singularly free from the failings that sometimes attach to student life. With superior mental powers, which would have adorned any position in the Christian Church, there were none of those eccentricities, which have often thrown a dark cloud over the early years of ministerial preparation. His piety was eminent, and was never for a moment clouded by

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the peculiar temptations of college engagements. His conduct was so exemplary, that one of his fellow students thought it was the result of a remarkably successful effort *to maintain a character in the house*. Having heard that such an opinion had been mooted, he seemed surprised at the credit given him for *such* a character, and said that "he was not conscious of any *habitual* motive but the desire to please God ; and thought any other motive wholly inadmissible as a rule of conduct." Some of the students owned with deep regret, that they were more influenced, at times, by a fear of incurring Everett's disapprobation, than by the apprehension of falling under the divine displeasure.

A moral dignity well nigh appalling must have existed in a "creature of like passions with ourselves" to produce emotions like these.

As a man and a minister at Reading, one who was never suspected of flattery, and whose encouragement on that account, stayed up the writer's mind in some of the most trying passages of his life, the Rev. John Howard Hinton, told the writer, that he had never seen Mr. Everett do an indiscreet action, nor utter an unguarded word. Such qualities produced their effects. The congrega-

tion increased, side galleries were erected, and no sooner erected than filled. Amid all this encouragement he often complained that but few seemed to be by his labours converted to God ; but his successor in the early part of his ministry, remembers well that not a few whom he received into fellowship, traced their first convictions or the deepening of their religious impressions to Mr. Everett's ministry. It is believed that he was the founder of the Reading Christian Instruction Society, and it is certain that he was its first secretary, having the valuable co-operation of the Revds. Messrs. Douglas, Sherman and Hinton, with the Wesleyan Ministers for the time being.

Not long after his settlement he brought home a lovely bride, but alas ! only to sicken and to die. She had returned one only of her wedding visits, when she re-entered her house to leave it no more, and before she had laid aside her bridal attire, her stricken partner had to follow her to the grave where a very touching scene occurred. Her sorrowing father, the Rev. Joseph Berry, in the agony of his grief had well nigh fallen into the grave, on the remains of his lovely and long cherished child, when he was prevented by the firmness of his son-in-law, whose countenance

though deadly pale, and already furrowed by the anguish of the sick room and the chamber of death, was the only tearless one in the vast concourse that had assembled to express their love and sorrow for the chief mourner.

Grief and watchings had however told upon him. He *could* resume his duties immediately after the blow which had nearly stunned him, because he was sustained in his spirit by the consolations of God, and in labours most abundant he spent the year, eighteen hundred and twenty-nine. But as his system was always fragile, always below the standard of healthy action, serious pulmonic diseases began to develope themselves, and with the last sabbath of that year, closed his brief but memorable ministry at Reading. After trying change of place and air, and finding little or no improvement, he resigned his office, on which occasion it ought to be noticed, on behalf of a church that has long been generous and kind, that a present was sent him by his bereaved people amounting to one hundred pounds, twenty of which he returned to be spent in charities connected with the chapel.

Unable for pulpit labour he turned to the press. A letter full of devout yearnings for the

salvation of souls was printed, and a copy sent to each member of the church and congregation ; and while residing at Clifton, he composed and printed an address to the inhabitants and visitors of that famous watering place, sending or leaving a copy at every house, which must have rung like a peal of alarm among the invalid or dissipated dwellers there, there being nothing of greater pungency and power in the writings of Alleine or of Baxter.

After this, with some slight share of returning health, the old Missionary spirit came upon him, and he resolved to become, at his own cost, a distributor of Tracts and Testaments among the semi-popish, semi-infidel population of France. His first visit was a failure. He went in a crowded steamer to Havre, and had no where to sleep but under a carriage on deck, with his blue bag for a pillow. The night air while asleep, fell damp and heavily upon him, and he awoke to bring up blood from his lungs. He returned of course without delay ; and when nursed and strengthened a little resumed his enterprize. Five visits he thus performed to the French, giving away and selling vast numbers of Testaments and tens of thousands of Tracts. Having spent in

this the proceeds of his furniture which he had sold on purpose, he appealed to the never-failing liberality of English Christians to help this work, and when he felt ashamed to make a second appeal to that quarter, he sacrificed a sixth part of his funded property, and sent it to his Paris correspondent, without a single hint that it was contributed from his own purse alone. This was his last effort for France, as he had found that conversation with a frivolous people in a foreign tongue, was a task too heavy for his crippled powers.

On his return from France, Mr. Everett settled at Bristol, opened a select school for twelve young gentlemen, and married a second time. His choice fell on an amiable and kindred spirit, so like another self, that she was ever ready to bear an equal, if not a greater share of every load of grief. He lost his sisters one after another—trials which greatly shook his tender, yet manly spirit, especially the loss of his sister Mrs. Goddard, who when single had been with him at Reading and in Devonshire, and inspired every circle she entered with affectionate regard. Her leave taking of her brother sheds a lustre equally upon human sympathies and on the grace of God.

His school immediately completed its number, and he threw into it the whole energies of his sanctified intellect and heart. His letters to the boys as they left the school, are beautiful examples of fidelity and pathetic persuasion.

It was while engaged in this congenial employment, and while giving the whole strength of his manhood to the cultivation of the conjugal and paternal affections, that one day digging in his garden, an employment that had been recommended to him for his health, the messenger that summoned his body, that had always been too feeble an instrument for the energy of his mind, to the dust, and his soul to the regions, whither the best of his aspirations had already ascended, arrived. It was the bursting of a pulmonary blood vessel, on which, having brought up about a tea-cupful of blood, he laid aside his spade, went to his beloved wife with a smile of heavenly resignation on his pallid countenance, and told her what had happened. He said "do not be distressed, I have long been in a state of perplexity, not knowing whether it was my duty to give up my engagements in the school or not. Now God has kindly, and I doubt not, wisely decided for me." With complete composure he went into the school-room

and dismissed the young gentlemen. They never saw him more till the cold hand of death was laid upon him, and then some of them wept over him tears of unfeigned sorrow. His death was in perfect harmony with his life, equally removed from rapture on the one hand and from depression on the other.

A beautiful Memoir of him was published by his friend and fellow-student, the Rev. H. J. Crump, Chaplain of Mill Hill Grammar School, a man like-minded with himself, and who has since joined him in the regions of felicity and glory. There is altogether something so beautiful, so lofty, and so worthy of imitation in the character of Mr. Everett, that his memoir may well take rank with those of Martyn, Spencer and Urquhart. For some of the facts here recorded, the writer is indebted to Mr. Crump's beautiful volume, and for many more, to the living testimony of his Reading friends, on whose hearts the image of his worth and holiness is indelibly impressed.

“ Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.”

Chapter Fourth.

FROM 1831 TO 1850.

The Rev. W. Legg supplies at the Chapel in the Spring of 1831—Departure for Cork—Resolution of the Church to invite him to the Co-pastorship—He accepts the invitation and is Ordained—Testimonials from his Tutors—His Confession of Faith—Statement of Conversion and Religious experience—Almshouses purchased—Select Congregational Library—Formation at Broad Street of the Castle Street Congregational Church—Erection of Upper Galleries and New School Rooms—Excitement respecting Socialism—A Secession—The Church revived—Jubilee of the present Chapel—Reflections.

IN March eighteen hundred and thirty-one, the Rev. WILLIAM LEGG, B. A., who had studied at Marischall College, Aberdeen ; at the University of Glasgow ; and at the Theological Academy in the latter city, under the care of the Rev. Greville Ewing and the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D. D., preached for two Sabbaths at Broad Street Chapel, having previously engaged to supply for three months the Congregational Chapel in the city of Cork, vacant by the removal of the Rev. John Burnett to Camberwell. The impression produced by this transient visit was favourable,

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and a request was made to him to return on probation after fulfilling his engagement in Ireland. He received a call to the pastoral office at Cork on the termination of his three months' supply, but having promised to return to Reading, and having been much gratified with the aspect of the Church there, and his own reception among the people, he declined the invitation to settle at Cork. Having commenced his probationary labours on Lord's-day, June nineteenth, he received at the end of three months a call, founded on the following Resolutions,—viz. :

“At a meeting of the Church of Christ in Broad Street, Reading, Berks, convened this twenty-sixth day of September, eighteen hundred and thirty-one, to consider the propriety of inviting the Rev. W. Legg, whose probationary services have now closed, to accept the Pastoral Charge in conjunction with the present Pastor, the Rev. A. Douglas, it was resolved unanimously :—

First.—That the members of this Church, with the communicants present, desire devoutly to express their gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, for having sent his ministering servant, Mr. William Legg to labour among them: they

feel that his theological sentiments and ministerial talents, his religious character and disposition, and his acceptable services while on probation, have drawn forth their esteem and attachment; and it is their cordial desire that he be called to become a Co-pastor with Mr. Douglas, so taking the oversight of them in the Lord.

Second.—That the Pastor and Deacons of this Church be requested to draw up a respectful and affectionate call to Mr. William Legg, to be signed by them in the name and in behalf of the Church, and that the same be sent to him without unnecessary delay.

(Signed) ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS,
Chairman."

Mr. Legg accepted the invitation, and was ordained on the fourteenth of December following. On that occasion the Rev. R. Bolton of Henley prayed and read the Scriptures; the Rev. J. B. Pearce of Maidenhead introduced the business and asked the questions; the Rev. A. Douglas took the ordination prayer, with the laying on of hands; the Rev. John Morison, D. D. of London, gave the charge and concluded the morning service. In the evening, the Rev. T.

Stiles of Marlow prayed and read; the Rev. George Clayton of Walworth preached the Sermon to the people, from the words: "Encourage him;" the Rev. J. W. Harvard, Wesleyan, concluded with prayer and the benediction.

Owing to the distance and the season of the year, neither of Mr. Legg's Tutors could attend the Ordination, but they united in the following certificate which was read at the service.

"We have much pleasure in certifying, that Mr. William Legg was a regular student at the Theological Academy, in connexion with the Congregational Union of Scotland; and while under our tuition, and attending the classes at the University, he discharged all the duties of a student with exemplary assiduity, and with much credit to himself and satisfaction to his teachers, and maintained an irreproachable Christian deportment. We affectionately commend him to the grace and blessing of God.

GREVILLE EWING.

RALPH WARDLAW."

The Ordination services were very solemn and delightful, the sympathy of the people being

called forth in a peculiar manner by the fact, that Mr. Legg was but just then recovering from a dangerous attack of illness, through which, under the divine blessing, he had been brought by the eminent skill of the now sainted Dr. Ring, and his relative and partner T. S. Workman, Esq., but still so weak, that he required to be supported during the Ordination prayer. Dr. Morison's charge was afterwards published under the title of "the Pastor and his Flock." It has had a large circulation, and ought to be in the hands of all, both ministers and people.

The Confession of Faith made on that occasion by Mr. Legg, is here subjoined, partly, because it is believed that it corresponds, in almost every point, with the doctrines that have been preached in Broad Street since the formation of the Church; and partly, because various individuals desire from time to time to read it in manuscript.

The question was put by Mr. Pearce—

"Will you state your views of the leading doctrines of the Christian faith?"

Mr. Legg replied—

I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to have been written by Divine inspiration. In these lively oracles we have the

revealed character of God, whom I believe to be self-existent—independent—inmutably the same, yesterday, to-day and for ever,—unchangeable alike in his being, his purposes, and all his perfections, whose power and wisdom are illimitable and incomprehensible; and by whom are possessed as essential attributes of his character, love, goodness, and mercy; holiness, justice and truth. This God while he is to be served as *One*, is made known in three persons, distinguished by the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, constituting one undivided existence, and equally claiming the adoration of all intelligent creatures; as being in their attributes co-equal, and in their existence co-eternal.

The subsistence of this Trinity in Unity I confess to be highly mysterious, but finding it recorded in a Revelation incontestably divine, I feel it my duty to yield it the homage of my faith and humbly to adore.

In the beginning of time, God created this world for the purpose of displaying his glory, and afterwards formed man who was to be its ruler, in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Soon after his creation he was placed in the garden of Eden, and commanded to dress it. When

man was placed in this situation, God deemed it meet to prove his obedience, by forbidding him to taste the fruit of one particular tree. This test of Adam's obedience was made known to him, accompanied by the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

As the garden abounded with fruits, so that scarcity was unknown, and as the threatening denounced on disobedience was inconceivably awful, Adam had undoubtedly a fair and a rational prospect of never ending bliss. The simplicity of the test, and the natural and moral endowments of the probationer, together with his local situation, display the benignity of the Creator, and vindicate his character from injustice or unkindness. The issue of the trial was such as never could have been expected. The test was violated. By the cunning craftiness of the serpent, the curiosity of Eve was raised to a high pitch of excitement; her natural desire for happiness preponderated over the strength of her holy principles; and at length the fatal fruit was touched, and taken and tasted. Adam was soon with her in the transgression, and in one day they lost their purity, dignity, and happiness, and became liable to death.

The test of Adam's obedience was given him in his public and representative character, so that, while as an individual he has shared in the consequences of his fall, he has also as their representative head, communicated these consequences of his probationary conduct to all his posterity. And thus it is that, notwithstanding his primitive integrity, man has sought out many inventions ; he inherits a polluted nature from his original progenitor ; and his heart is in a state of enmity against God. Such likewise is the nature and extent of his depravity, that no process of *intellectual* cultivation, however long continued, can restore him to any thing like pristine purity. Although from the nature of the case, it is not impossible that a holy being should fall from perfection, yet, from the nature of the case, it is impossible that a sinful being should of himself ascend to purity. No mental improvement can ever make the sinner believe, that happiness is to be found in that which is the object of his hatred ; and therefore man remains not only depraved, but without the power of effecting his deliverance. Such I believe to be the natural character and condition of every individual of the human race.

Almighty God, notwithstanding the contempt of his authority which we had shown, interposed on our behalf, and has provided a remedy. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." This remedy has been revealed to the Church at different periods. The first promise to Adam—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," revealed it, as the dawning of twilight exhibits the face of things, in a faint and indistinct form; but during the Old Testament dispensation, the light of Revelation waxed clearer and stronger, while the plan of mercy appeared invested with new beauties, being developed by additional promises, and by increasing discoveries of its nature, glory and extent. The light which had been gradually collecting, and which had illumined in its progress the minds of Patriarchs, Priests and Prophets, was now converging to Calvary's cross, and at length bursting forth in noon-day splendour, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, stood revealed the Saviour of the world.

The Eternal Word, that he might be in a capacity for accomplishing the work of Redemption, became incarnate, and appeared in the land of

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Judea, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. His manner of life, the doctrines which he taught—showing the spirituality of the law—and the precepts which he inculcated; together with the frank and unsparing proofs he administered to the guilty; all these, exasperated the malice, and excited against him the envy and jealousy of the Jewish people, and especially of their rulers. This opposition to the Son of God continued to increase, till the fulness of the time was come, when he voluntarily submitted to a cursed and shameful death, that he might “make peace by the blood of his cross.” His death, as he was altogether free from personal sin, was I believe a perfect *propitiation*, well pleasing unto God. The Divine dignity of his person gave such a value to his temporary sufferings, that “his blood cleanseth from all sin.” While he “was holy, harmless, undefiled and separated from sinners,” “he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” By the transgression of man, the authority of the law was called in question; the dignity of the Divine justice was obscured; the moral government of God was injured, and, till the penalty be fully inflicted on the offender, or some scheme devised, by which

the law might enjoy its restored honour, and its authority meet a solemn vindication, the character of God as legislator was exposed to obloquy and reproach.

The Atonement is not to be regarded as a measure resorted to for retrieving a loss that had not been anticipated—for subverting the designs of an enemy that had not been known. The eternal plan was such, that the fall of man and the death of Christ, together with their consequences, were only developments of the deep and immutable counsel of God, whose counsels alone are destined to stand. In those counsels, a Saviour for man was not only provided, but a certain definite number of the human race was chosen, to receive the blessings of redemption, and to become heirs of heaven and of a glorious immortality.

This doctrine rests simply on a matter of fact. If the recovery of a sinner from apostacy commences with God, if the first change on the soul from sin to holiness commences by the Holy Spirit's agency, as I believe it does, the change must have been designed; and if it were designed the moment before its accomplishment, must have been always designed, and consequently *eternally*

designed. In the Divine mind there is no succession of thought, and therefore every purpose of God is, and must be, eternal. As God is immutable, the atonement could produce no change on his character, so that now, as ever, he is equally strict to his threatenings, true to his declarations, and faithful to his promises. But by the atonement of Christ, the authority of his law is displayed in awful majesty, while mercy triumphs in the exuberance of its blessings; or in scripture language, "God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth." "The just God and the Saviour."

This atonement I believe is sufficient for *all* men, and it is on the ground of this sufficiency, that the invitations which are addressed to sinners indiscriminately, are both consistent and rational. To deny the sufficiency of the atonement for all, and at the same time to believe, that the invitations are given to all, is fraught not simply with contradiction, but with fearful impiety. A mode of conduct is attributed to God, which, if attributed to man, would procure the epithets, deceitful, cruel and unjust.

But while the atonement is *sufficient* for *all*, it is *efficient* only to believers. Its blessings are

proffered to all who hear the gospel, but imparted to such only who embrace it. Faith in Christ is hence the medium through which the blessings of the atonement are communicated. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." I do not mean to assert, that saving faith is the meritorious condition, on account of which the person receives a claim on the atonement of Christ. The atonement itself absolutely considered, forms the only ground, on account of which the sinner receives the pardon of his sins. But faith in Christ, while in no sense it forms a meritorious condition, is nevertheless a means appointed of God, and is essentially necessary to salvation; "for he that believeth not is condemned already." Hence I believe it to be the positive duty of all, to whom this method of remedial mercy is made known, cheerfully to receive it by faith: for while sinners, as I have said, can never work their way by intellectual improvement, from their degraded condition to pristine purity, yet to a full compliance with the demands of the gospel, there is I apprehend no other impediment, except a wilful, and consequently a criminal enmity of heart against it. And here also the man is met precisely as

required by his moral wants. The doctrines, the invitations of the gospel are applied to his heart and conscience, by the free and almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, discovering to him the glory of Christ, and disposing him to believe in his name.

When persons become interested in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, through the medium of faith, and the ineffable grace of the Spirit, they are taken into the number of God's children, and enjoy the advantages resulting from that most honourable of all relations. Amongst these blessings, Sanctification stands pre-eminently high. By means of it, men are disposed to love God, and, of course, to hate every thing that stands opposed to his holy nature and law. It is gradually carried forward by the blessing of God upon his word, his ordinances, and the whole procedure of his providence.

Perseverance in the exercise of dependance on Christ, in the practice of holiness, and in the observance of all the ordinances of God, I consider as the only decisive evidence of being born again. I believe that though real christians may depart from God for a season, and act unworthily of their holy vocation, yet that he, in the exercise

of his mercy, will bless his word of grace and rod of correction for bringing them to repentance ; that he will heal their backslidings, and save them from the polluting influences, as well as from the penal consequences of sin.

As the Scriptures draw a broad line of demarcation between those who do, and those who do not believe the gospel, it is the duty of all Christians to separate themselves from the world that lieth in wickedness, and to unite themselves in the fellowship of the Gospel, that they may observe the ordinances, and yield a cheerful obedience to the laws of Christ.

A company of believers thus separated, with their Pastor or Pastors and Deacons, I consider as a Church of Christ after the model of the New Testament. The ordinances they have to observe, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper ; the former of which, I believe it to have been the practice of the primitive Christians to administer to their infant offspring ; and that it is an appointment of Christ, my mind is convinced from the nature of the Abrahamic covenant, compared with a number of passages in the New Testament portion of the Divine word.

I believe that there will be a resurrection of the

dead, both of the just and the unjust. Borne by angels to the right hand of the great White Throne, the righteous, with bodies not only incorrupted, but incorruptible, shall rejoice in the presence of Christ, and witness the solemnities of the judgment, where they shall meet the approbation of the Judge. The wicked, arraigned on the left hand of the tribunal, must render an account of the deeds done in the body; and as they have rejected the substitute for a violated law, must receive the sentence of the Lawgiver, "Depart from me!" "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous unto life eternal."

Question Second.—"Will you mention the methods by which you have been led to adopt these views, and the grounds on which you venture to conclude that they have savingly impressed your heart?"

"Born of parents, who have long stood, and still stand distinguished, chiefly for their enlightened piety, and active christianity, I enjoyed from the cradle ample instruction in the lessons of godliness, watered by constant prayer that I might be found "among the living in Jerusalem." And I

can at this moment, by cherishing the fond remembrances, hear again the tones of unutterable interest in which a mother's tenderness whispered the character and love of a Saviour in the ear of my infancy. But the lessons of a father's vigilance, and the earnestness of a mother's prayers seemed to be for a length of time alike utterly in vain. I loved the instructors and the mode of instruction, and on this account listened with respect, but I inwardly hated every truth which was communicated. I was never permitted wholly to forget these instructions, for though in the course of Providence the bounds of my habitation became fixed at a considerable distance from my native home, I was not altogether beyond the inspection of religious friends. Still my situation was one in which my soul was placed in imminent hazard, by the maxims and practices of sinful companions, with whom a large portion of my time was unavoidably spent, and with whom I had the misfortune to enjoy a dangerous popularity. It was not easy for superior religious advantages to repel the constant contiguity of such influences, and my mind became gradually very careless, and devoid of thought. Yet even then I was at times aroused from frivolity and folly by

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occasional intercourse with the eminently holy father and pious younger brother of my beloved friend* who has come to take an active part in the solemn services of this interesting day. By a train of singular providential events that brother has, within the present year, been ordained pastor over a Church which many years after the time referred to, I was myself rendered in some measure the means of collecting. Returning one evening from the house of these excellent friends, friends I am sure for my father's sake more than at that time for my own, a messenger met me to inform me of the death of one of my brothers, which made a deep impression on my mind. So stunned were my affections, that between grief for my loss and fear about my soul, I felt as if it were cruelty for the ploughman to whistle at the plough, or even for the lark to sing in the heavens, the very fact that nature smiled around me becoming one of the most fertile occasions of dismay. This tendency to reflect my own feelings on external objects, has often been a source to me of mingled sorrow and of joy. By attending however to religious duties, and trusting in them, my conscience was first

* Rev. Dr. Morison.

quieted and then became more hardened than before. The voice of God's people and the voice of his providence had awakened a salutary concern in my breast, I seemed earnestly engaged in the pursuit of salvation, but the enemy left no artifice untried, and in consequence of stifling convictions I became more callous, as iron is hardened in the fire.

Being always fond of books, I purchased about this time from a travelling retailer of small works, a copy of Alleine's *Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, which aroused me again to a state of great apprehension. Often did I retire to the thicket of a wood adjoining my abode to read that work under great horror of soul. All this however was got over, and my goodness was fleeting as the morning cloud and evanescent as the early dew. When sixteen years of age, I had two narrow escapes from death by accident, within a few weeks of each other. The latter of these gave me a very near view of the eternal world, which renewed my former impressions, or rather created new ones such as I had never before felt. For these circumstances I was in some measure prepared by the solicitude of my eldest sister, who, full of anxiety about my eternal salvation, had, a few weeks

before the accident took place, taken me aside and plied my conscience so with the truths of Religion and her sisterly tears, that after I had seen myself as it were ransomed from the grave, every word she had uttered seemed to have cleaved to me like an arrow sticking fast.

I now began to see that the law of God is holy and spiritual ; that its demands are extensive ; its penalties just, and that God would have been righteous if I had been condemned. I knew there was a Saviour provided for the guilty. I had also heard fully and frequently enough, that he is able to save to the uttermost, but there was such a sense of guilt upon my mind that, at first, I could not venture to cry for mercy. I resolved, however, to abandon every sinful practice, and every sinful companion. Soon after this I occupied a situation where I had an opportunity of hearing the gospel from the lips of the Rev. James Robertson of Stuartfield. Although that gospel was plainly and powerfully preached in my hearing every Lord's-day by this faithful minister, still my mind continued in a state of desponding agitation. I could apply none of the invitations of the gospel to my own case, although I saw that they were suitable to others. By means of

these convictions, God gave me a more and more impressive view of my character as a sinner, and of himself as just and holy. But it does not appear that I yet hated sin as opposed to the divine law, but because it exposed me to punishment. In my case the knowledge of the bane was vivid and substantial, but the perception of the antidote was dim. I was convinced of sin, but not of righteousness. I was led to the refuge, through a long course of painful conviction and harrassing fear. So painful indeed was that process, that often did I arise from a restless bed, and seek in the silence and solitude of the night, the loneliest and dreariest situations, where I poured out my heart in prayer before God. Along with this, I steadily pursued such a course of reformation, as I thought would recommend me to his compassionate regard. I had a vague conviction that the only thing that can relieve a mind oppressed with guilt, and dreading a judgment to come, is that view of God which is afforded by the gospel of Christ. Still I anxiously wished to do something that would render me fit for coming to him.

The state of my mind all this while, from a

mistaken delicacy, I carefully concealed from my parents.

While in the midst of this mental conflict, Boston's Fourfold State fell into my hands. This book, through the blessing of God, was of great service to me,—in deepening my convictions, correcting my views of the plan of salvation, and showing me the folly and danger of that self-dependance which then prevailed in my mind. My Bible and that book were my constant companions in my leisure hours through the week, and on the Lord's day I attended the ministry of Mr. Robertson, already referred to, by means of which the Lord, in his tender mercy, was graciously pleased gradually to discover to me the fulness of Christ, and to give me some measure of joy and peace in believing.

Still I kept all these things a profound secret. I often thought of proposing myself for admission into the Church, but I feared to do it lest I should have proved a reproach to the cause and people of God. It was not till several years after I had been enabled to trust in Christ for salvation, that some circumstances, unknown to me now, induced Mr. Robertson to put certain questions to me which produced a free explanation respecting the

state of my mind, and very soon led to my admission into the Church under his care. This had a decidedly favourable influence on my character. From that day down to the present hour, the Gospel, the people and the ordinances of Christ, have, if I know anything of my own heart, been to that heart, with all its faults and follies, inexpressibly dear.

In supplying you, sir, with this simple and unadorned statement of only a brief outline of my religious experience, I desire to adore the boundless riches of that mercy which was then extended to me, and which amid many short-comings on the one hand, and transgressions on the other, has never altogether forsaken me: and while I feel myself to be less than the least of all his mercies, I hold it to be none of the least of his favours to me that he has given me, I trust, a sincere desire to devote myself, exclusively, to the promotion of his declarative glory in the world by preaching the Gospel of his Son. And in doing this I count it an honour to belong to a body, in which a minister of that Gospel has no spiritual superior but Christ, a body which regards Him as the alone Head of his Church, and the exclusive Lord of the conscience; which holds the Bible to be the only and

sufficient standard of faith and practice ; which considers religion as too sacred a thing to be mixed up with the secular interests and management of this world's kingdoms ; which views the voluntary union of the people of God as a first principle of all social action and enjoyment in religion ; and which possesses the undisputed right of an elective, renovated, and pious ministry. I wish well to all of every name who love the Lord Jesus Christ, but from early and deliberate choice, from mature and sober conviction, I remain a Congregational Dissenter, the more confirmed the longer I witness the salutary tendency of the great principles which that system involves.

Confiding in the promise of the Redeemer, I request the prayers of His brethren and friends.

Under this last co-pastorship the Church continued to enjoy a good measure of prosperity. Its liberality to all the objects of christian benevolence steadily increased. Five houses were purchased at considerable expense, and converted into Almshouses for the use of poor members of the Church. This generous movement was aided by various members of the congregation, but it was chiefly prompted and carried through by the

great liberality of the late Mr. James Stevens and his sister, formerly of Caversham. This "brother beloved" lately died at Kensington. He was the most unostentatious of men, but possessing property, lived in comparative retirement, except that he laboured long in a Sunday School at Maple Durham, in connection with Broad Street Chapel, sometimes clothing the whole of the children, and in other ways doing great good, concealed from every eye save that of his heavenly Father and the recipient of his bounty. He used to say, it was hard for the minister to visit the poor without giving them something, so he or his sister would supply him with a five-pound note at a time for that purpose. The memory of the generous, as well as of the just, is blessed.

Besides these works of charity the chapel continued to be blessed as the birth-place of not a few souls. Bible Classes were carried on, and from the commencement of his ministry to the present day, the Sunday Schools have been examined by the junior pastor at the close of the afternoon service, on a lesson previously furnished to the teachers. He also felt a strong desire to cultivate in the congregation a taste for reading, in which he was ardently supported by many of the leading friends.

The following proposals for the formation of a select Congregational Library in connection with the Chapel were issued. "Without some employment for the mind, suited to its nature, the hours that are not devoted to business, are liable to be lost in trifling, if not spent in hurtful or unprofitable conviviality. A mode of passing time not very becoming in accountable and immortal beings. A habit which is productive of no social or individual advantage—which adds nothing to the joys of prosperity, nor diminishes anything from the sorrows of adversity—which cannot soothe the King of Terrors, mitigate the agonies of dying, nor secure any title to Eternal Life. On the contrary when "time shall be no more," the recollection that it has been wasted or devoted to improper indulgence, must be attended with deep and unavailing regret. To prevent this—to afford to those who may avail themselves of it, an opportunity of employing their leisure hours in useful reading, and thus to contribute to their improvement and happiness, it is proposed to form in connection with Broad Street Chapel, a select Congregational Library, in which it is hoped that in a short time, there will be found sufficient variety to gratify every taste, except the vicious

or the frivolous, while religion shall hold in it what it ought to do in the heart of every reader, the highest place. This Library will be entirely distinct in principle from the plan of the "Loan Library" already existing." This appeal was responded to, a Book Society was formed and existed for a number of years, alienating all the books it purchased to the Library for the use of the congregation. The Library contains many very valuable books, while the subscription is only one shilling a quarter, and it is hoped by the publication of this that many will be induced to avail themselves of its stores.

The years that have elapsed since the above address was issued, have given the writer many opportunities of witnessing the advantages of a taste for reading. He has seen many with whom things have gone amiss, suffering under the world's frown, or lying upon beds of languishing and pain, in silence and solitude, deriving from a habit of reading, thoroughly formed in early life, a source of happiness and cheerfulness, and a shield from half their ills.

If he has influence with any young person he would intreat him to pray to God to form this taste within him, for thus shall he live in the society of

the wisest, the tenderest, the bravest and the holiest characters that have ever adorned the annals of our race.

In eighteen hundred and thirty-six, on the removal of the Rev. James Sherman to Surrey Chapel, those of his congregation who were on principle, Dissenters, left Castle Street, because it had been transferred to the Established Church by the Trustees, most of whom were Churchmen, though they had maintained separate worship ever since the death of the Rev. Mr. Cadogan, as they considered that the gospel was not fully preached in their parish churches. The Dissenters were formed into a new Church at Broad Street Chapel by Mr. Hinton and the junior Pastor; and there the Rev. Dr. Bennett delivered to them a course of lectures on the Scriptural Principles of Church Fellowship and Government, which were afterwards published under the title of "The Communion of Saints," the Broad Street Church uniting with the new one in guaranteeing that a sufficient number of copies should be sold. There were some at Broad Street who feared that the formation of this Church might prove the erection of a rival injurious to its prosperity, but time has

shown, that disinterested efforts to extend the Redeemer's Kingdom can only be productive of good. The new Church built an elegant place of worship, of the Corinthian order, called Castle Street Congregational Chapel, and enjoys the ministrations of its first Pastor, the Rev. Spedding Curwen, with whom and his people the writer and his flock have enjoyed unbroken harmony.

In this same year, in consequence of the new Registration Act, which was one of the results of the agitation on the subject of Dissenters' Grievances, the Registers of Births, Baptisms and Burials, belonging to Broad Street were copied, and the Originals deposited in the Central Registrar's Office, London, and in eighteen hundred and thirty-seven the Chapel was duly registered for the solemnization of Marriages.

In the close of eighteen hundred and thirty-eight, the inhabitants of Reading were greatly agitated by the appearance among them of Robert Owen, the Socialist. Being excluded from the Town Hall, by the authorities, he delivered a course of Lectures at the Theatre, denouncing indiscriminately all the truths of religion and every institu-

tion of society. Numbers of the sceptical, the thoughtless and the young crowded to hear him, and even some persons of property sanctioned him and embraced his views. Public meetings were held by him on the Sundays, on one of which occasions a thunder storm having occurred, a young lady of high talents and attainments, who had filled the situation of governess in several Clergymen's families, but who had become a disciple of the determined disbeliever, stood up and said, "How happy am I now to be delivered from the old superstition of a God thundering in the skies." Mr. Owen issued a challenge to all the Clergy, Ministers, and leading Gentlemen of the town to meet him and discuss the merits of their respective systems. As the junior Pastor of Broad Street accepted this challenge, and as it was not without its influence on the interests of the Chapel, he has suffered, at the solicitation of friends, though not without strong misgivings, a few of the facts which were published both in the local and London papers of that day, respecting the discussion to appear in these Memorials. Mr. Owen politely supplied copies of his works, and allowed a month to master their details. Meanwhile special prayer meetings were held at Broad

Street Chapel, and the members of the Established Church often assured the writer that he was not forgotten at their family altars. When the time came the excitement was intense. The Discussion took place at the Town Hall, on the evenings of the fourth and fifth of March, eighteen hundred and thirty-nine. The crowd was so great to witness the novelty here of a public discussion of subjects so momentous, that many were an hour on the stairs before gaining admission, and students from Oxford offered a guinea to aged females at the doors for their shilling tickets, and were refused. Dr. Cowan occupied the chair with great impartiality. The disputants were to occupy twenty minutes each, and to speak several times in succession. The result was that the townspeople chose to say that the victory was on the side of Christianity. The proceeds of the admission tickets were given to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but a Committee was formed, comprising gentlemen of every religious denomination, Magistrates and others, to raise by subscriptions limited to five shillings, an equal sum to present to the advocate of Bible truth and Social Order. A public meeting was held, at which the venerable and beloved physician Dr. Ring presided.

Dr. Cowan undertook the presentation which consisted of an elegant Bible accompanied by a Purse. In the Bible is the following Inscription :—

AT A PUBLIC MEETING
HELD
IN THE TOWN HALL, READING,
ON
MONDAY, THE 15TH OF APRIL, 1839,

This Bible

ACCOMPANIED BY A PURSE CONTAINING SEVENTY GUINEAS

WAS PRESENTED TO

THE REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B. A.

BY NEARLY 500 SUBSCRIBERS,

As a Testimony of their respect for his able and Christian defence of the great and glorious Truths which it contains, and as a Memorial of his triumphant refutation of the demoralizing System and infidel Opinions of

MR. ROBERT OWEN.

THOMAS RING, M. D. CHAIRMAN.

COMMITTEE.

CHARLES COWAN, M. D.
HENRY F. LETCHWORTH.
JAMES JOHNSON.
RICHARD BUNCOMBE.
THOMAS LETCHWORTH.
SAMUEL CHASE.

THOMAS CHAMPION.
CHARLES S. ROBINSON.
THOMAS LODGE.
THOMAS ARIEL TAYLOR.
BENJAMIN WILLIAMS.

Among the many tokens of approval elicited by these events, none was more highly valued than the following letter, received on the day after the Discussion terminated, from a Gentleman whose name appears on the Committee, who soon after filled the office of chief Magistrate, and who stands deservedly high among his fellow citizens.

“ Rev. Sir,

I trust you will pardon the liberty I take in addressing these few lines to you, but though personally unknown to you, I feel as if I should be guilty of the highest ingratitude, were I not to tender you my most cordial thanks for your intrepid and able defence of principles, which, in common with you, I hold as above all price. Though unaccustomed for reasons which I need not trouble you with assigning, to attend public meetings of almost any kind, I could not forbear attending at the Town Hall both on Monday and yesterday evenings, that I might in so doing publicly testify the deep sense I entertained of the manliness of your conduct, to say the least of it, in accepting a challenge from which others seemed instinctively to shrink, and in ad-

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venturing alone into the listed field to sustain the insulted honour of the truth of the Gospel. And I do most heartily congratulate you on the triumphant issue of the contest; an issue which reflects honor not on yourself alone, but on those great and eternal verities, which with such unflinching courage, such beauty of illustration, such strength of argument, such truly christian spirit, you avowed, unfolded, maintained and exemplified. I trust that what you uttered on those two memorable evenings will be long remembered; and that the great end you had in view, when you imposed upon yourself a task of such magnitude, and yet of such extreme delicacy, will, in answer to your own prayers, and those of the many who anxiously followed you to this scene of conflict and of triumph, be accomplished, in the general, deep and abiding conviction of those who heard you, of the stability of that faith which Mr. Owen has with such temerity assailed, and, if it be the will of God, in the speedy conversion to that faith of him, who has with such hardihood, openly, and in face of the whole world, bid defiance to it.

Again thanking you most cordially for those labours of faith and love of which I have been a

delighted witness, allow me in conclusion to subscribe myself

Rev. Sir,

With every sentiment of unfeigned respect
and esteem,

Your obliged and obedient Servant."

7, Portland Place,

6th March, 1839.

Soon after these proceedings, Dr. Cowan delivered a lecture in the Town Hall to a crowded audience, in which he denounced with great force of argument and fervour of eloquence, the delusions and depravity of Mr. Owen's system. This gave a death blow to the scheme of the new moral world in Reading; it could not bear the light of these several disclosures: the meetings at the Theatre were forsaken, and ere long, Socialism was heard of among us no more.

Notwithstanding the successive enlargements of the Chapel, more accommodation was still required, and in eighteen hundred and forty-one, a second set of galleries was erected for the Sunday School Children, at an expense of five hundred and twenty-seven pounds. This liberal effort was

attended with various and great advantages ; the Chapel will now contain a thousand persons ; the children are placed in a position to be examined from the pulpit, and retire by separate doors from the congregation ; and not least, a considerable number of free sittings is provided in the space formerly occupied by the boys' school.

The last improvements took place in eighteen hundred and forty-five, when the present commodious Table Pew was constructed, and about five and twenty additional sittings secured.

In eighteen hundred and forty-six, the Church that built and worships in the handsome gothic structure, known as Trinity Chapel in the Queen's Road, emanated from Broad Street. As in most similar cases there were painful feelings connected with this movement, but there was no disposition on either part to cherish or perpetuate them. The Pastor of Broad Street took part at the opening of the new Chapel, and after a brief space, on their own application to their former minister, the new Church was taken into the full fellowship of the four associated Churches meeting monthly for missionary prayer. The experience of three years has settled the conviction

that, in such cases, it is far better to cultivate the charities of good neighbourhood and the sincerity and gentleness of Christ, than to cherish feelings, which only serve to harass the existing portion of the Churches and often bequeath a feud to the succeeding generation.

It is a fact that cannot be recorded without adoring gratitude, that though the Church lost this year twenty-seven in full membership by the secession, and five by death, yet it had added to it three-and-thirty, leaving a clear gain of one over both sources of weakness. It has increased in nearly the same proportion every year since then, with comparatively little diminution by death or removals, and the congregation it is thought, is larger as a whole than it was before. During this Jubilee year fewer than the average number have been added, but it is worthy of remark that only two have died, not one to a hundred and thirty, there being two hundred and sixty-nine on the existing roll of membership. It is presumed that in scarcely any other form of society has the rate of mortality been so low. At the early stage of this last period of comparative revival, Mr. John Cooper, who about this time removed to London, but still retained his deaconship, and frequently came down

to attend to its duties, rendered essential service both to the Pastor and the flock.

The year eighteen hundred and fifty will long be remembered at Broad Street Chapel as its year of Jubilee. The second of December was indeed a jubilant day, for not merely all the Dissenters of the Town, the Wesleyans, and many Churchmen, but leading members from the neighbouring and much-honoured Church at Henley, as well as from other places, assembled and rejoiced together. Very full reports of the services appeared in the local papers, the Reading Mercury and the Berkshire Chronicle of the same week. From the former a few statements respecting the morning service is here appended.

“The present Chapel in Broad Street having on Monday last attained its fiftieth or Jubilee year, the event was regarded with much interest and celebrated by appropriate services.

At eleven o'clock the public service was appointed to commence, and by that hour a large number of persons had assembled in the Chapel, among whom were most of the ministers from adjacent towns. The Rev. Dr. Jenkyn, President of Coward College, London, read selections of

Scripture and offered up prayer, after which the Rev. George Clayton of Walworth, delivered an able discourse from Numbers, twenty-third chapter, and twenty-third verse—"What hath God wrought?" Having shewn the work of God in Creation, the economy of nature, in Providence and in Redemption, the Rev. Gentleman invited his hearers to a devout retrospect as to what God had done for them individually, and to trace the various manifestations of his power and favour on their behalf; he also pleaded for the same review respecting the Church and congregation, and said, "You meet this day, and it is a comfort to my heart to see you meet in such goodly numbers, to celebrate an important period in the history of this Church: there are not only those who are specifically of this Church, but there are associated with you now many friends and brethren of other congregations who have come to sympathize with you—to rejoice in your joy—to urge you to fresh earnestness and zeal, and to commend you to the Great Head of the Church. This is delightful. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is to see brethren, and to see ministers of other congregations and of neighbouring towns, gather around the faithful minister of this place in order

to share with him the jubilee of pious resolution—a spectacle, I doubt not, that is acceptable to the eye of Heaven—in which angels themselves take an interest, and say, “Behold how these congregations live in unity.” You are called to look back upon the time when your beginnings were small. The origin of this interest may be traced to the ejection of many conscientious men from the church as by law established in these realms, by the Act of Uniformity. Hence the cause originated and God has sustained it for nearly two hundred years. Your attention is now particularly directed to the period when this place of worship was reared. I have a distinct recollection of the old Chapel, where for some years of my life I worshipped. I recollect the old vestry, (pointing to the spot) where we used to meet for the purpose of holding social prayer, and the Minister and Deacons who were always present, surrounded by praying friends. Many of them have fallen asleep, but a few continue to this day. Will you forgive a personal reference when I say, that the first time these lips opened with fear and trembling to offer a public prayer was in the old Chapel, and some of you can give me credit when I tell you, that the amount of painful feeling

connected with that first exercise was more than I can describe. My knees shook together, and my joints and loins were loosed when the first prayer was offered in the Vestry of the old Chapel. I can only say that by the help of God I continue till this day.

The death of the Rev. Mr. Cadogan, of Saint Giles', took place simultaneously with the acquaintance which I was so happy as to form with the Town of Reading, when I became a pupil of the late Dr. Valpy. On the death of the excellent Mr. Cadogan, whose fame was to a considerable degree catholic, not a few used to find their way for the Bread of Life to Broad Street Chapel, and the influx to the congregation became such, that it was thought desirable to provide greater accommodation for those who were willing to attend, and hence the pious design arose in the bosom of not a few to raise this house for God. In those days it was a great undertaking: we had not so much of Chapel-building then as now; it was looked upon with fear and trembling by those who undertook it, but it was raised, it was opened, and it was paid for; it has been enlarged, and it continues to the present hour to be "the house of God," and, I trust, "the gate of heaven." The

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services of the opening-day are fresh in my recollection, and doubtless, in that of a few who are now present. My beloved and revered Father, the Rev. John Clayton of the Weigh-house, preached the morning Sermon, in which he endeavoured to shew that the truest patriotism consisted in having a due regard to the sanctuary of God, and to the honour of his house. His text was—"He hath loved our nation and built us a synagogue." He was followed in the afternoon by the Rev. James Hinton, of Oxford,—a man of distinguished talent, and whose memory is still fragrant in the Church; and in the evening by the Rev. Joseph Hughes, of Battersea, from the impressive enquiry, "Will ye also be his disciples?" from which he urged the congregation to cherish a fixed affection to the valued ministry and institutions of God within these walls. Each of these faithful and honoured instruments have been removed from our world; they are gone to serve and shine in other spheres; but it is not too much to suppose, that their happy spirits may be looking over the battlements of heaven, and taking a spiritual interest in the transactions of this important season. Surely, it will serve to give a zest to their song of jubilee, if they are permitted to mingle their sympathies with ours on this our

jubilee occasion. Aye, there were others not in public life, who took a distinguished and very peculiar interest in the solemnities of that day. I can remember more than one who came to lay a brick in these walls, and accompanied the operation with prayer to God, and a liberal donation towards erecting this sanctuary. They "being dead are yet speaking," and if we were disposed to interpret the language which in sepulchral tones issues from their resting places, methinks they would cry, "Work while it is called day, for the night cometh when no man can work."

Mr. Clayton's appeals to various classes were full of pathos and of power—the whole discourse was felt by all as the most appropriate that could be, his tender allusions to his connexion with Mr. Douglas, and his perfect sympathy with the place and the people, placed him on a vantage ground which he occupied with an impressiveness never to be forgotten. He concluded with a review of the great changes which have occurred during the last fifty years—the progress of public opinion in favour of the voluntary principle—the accomplishment of the great project of the abolition of slavery—the efforts for the education of the people—the awakening of the Church to

the Missionary Enterprize, the glorious liberty granted to the Bible, producing in all pious minds a feeling of devout thanksgiving to Almighty God.

In the evening a Public Tea Meeting was held in the New Hall, London Street, to which nearly all the Dissenters of the Town sought to gain admittance, seven hundred were actually accommodated, and hundreds more went away unable to find room. At the meeting the substance of these Memorials was read, and Addresses appropriate to the occasion, breathing the kindest feelings to the Pastor and his people, were delivered by the Rev. James Sherman, the Rev. W. Harris, the Rev. T. W. Jenkyn, D. D., the Rev. G. Clayton, the Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, the Rev. S. Curwen, the Rev. J. J. Brown, Baptist, and the Rev. T. Hodson, Wesleyan.

The Pastor and flock to whom these most encouraging attentions were paid, must ever cherish a feeling of grateful love and good neighbourhood to their many friends of all denominations, and earnestly pray, that they all may be ready to welcome the sound of THAT TRUMP, which shall wake the dead, announce the appearance of the Judge, and proclaim to the perfected saints an eternal Jubilee of Bliss.

Reflections.

Having now taken a survey of the leading events of our history—having called to remembrance the way in which the Lord led our Fathers, it would be unbecoming to close without making a few reflections.

Are we not called upon highly to value our present privileges ? especially the freedom of worship we enjoy, and our connection with a polity which embodies certain scriptural truths not adequately honoured by some other religious sects ;—the voluntary support of religious worship, and the sole authority of Christ in his own Church. The severest forms of persecution had passed away before the Church at Broad Street was formed. The days had gone when a venerable Pastor might be torn from the bosom of his family and flock, hurried through a crowd of enraged spectators, laden with chains as a delinquent, and thrust into a gloomy dungeon, with the implements of torture placed beside him in his cell, that, by a refinement of cruelty, he might be led to anticipate the day of a sorer agony. But the class of men to which

Mr. Juice belonged had passed through all this, and still showed that their minds could not be bound by any fetters which their enemies could forge. And their flocks had stood equally firm. The venerable sire—the aged matron—the ardent youth—and the lovely virgin, had all met death in his most forbidding forms, for the principles on which this Church is founded ; had suffered at the stake, exclaiming “none but Christ !” and lifting their eyes to Him have cried, “For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.” Theirs was, and ours still is, “the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion.”

But though the flames of Smithfield and of the Grass Market had been quenched, it was no small trial of faith and patience to be deprived of their standing in society, and of all the living which they had, and to be turned out of house and home, with their wives and little ones, upon a cold and thankless world. Still they were more than conquerors too. It was the religion of piety conquering the religion of power. It was passive energy sustaining the shock of infuriated bigotry. By these men our Churches were formed, and it deeply

concerns these Churches themselves to study the history of their formation; that by duly estimating the circumstances leading to that event, they may be assured that so wide a dissent from prevailing opinion and practice, was not presumptuous or schismatic; that their errors and defects were merely the accidents of their position; that there was no extravagance in the fervour of their zeal; and that it belongs to the existing generation to render a service, to which few other religious communities are equally competent, to the cause of spiritual truth, against the aggressions of the Man of Sin.

Responsibility is always proportionate to privilege. A great work still lies before every section of the true Church of Christ. Other men have laboured and we have entered into their labours. This Church was early baptised by the Missionary spirit, its present members should still seek a larger measure of the same baptism. This work belongs to us in common with others. It is theirs as much as ours, but it is ours no less than theirs. Great attention is drawn at present to aggressions made upon the sceptre under which our religious freedom is enjoyed, and upon that portion of the globe which has, in the providence

of God, been brought under its sway. Let the fact be duly pondered by us, that the British Empire embraces at this moment one-fifth of the entire population of the globe; that it includes the most free and active peoples of Europe; the largest territory subject to any individual power in America; the most promising tribes of Africa; the most ancient and civilized nations of Asia; and nearly all the European influence in Polynesia. But an equal amount of obligation rests upon the Churches of Britain. Our beloved sovereign, Queen Victoria, reigns over more Roman Catholics than the Pope; over more Mohammedans than the Sultan; over more Pagans than all the kings of Africa. "There are in her dominions more Mohammedans than Christians, including both Catholics and Protestants; and more Pagans than Mohammedans and Christians together; and therefore were the question, What is the religion of the British Empire? to be answered by a simple reference to the religion of the majority of its subjects, the reply must be PAGANISM."* All these enjoy perfect toleration.

* These startling facts are proved by Arthur's 'Extent and moral Statistics of the British Empire,' as quoted by Dr. W. L. Alexander.

How different from the day when the minister of Broad Street could only steal out to preach under the cloud of night. But surely this is not a time for Christians to vex one another, when such duties are laid at their doors to be done for God and the true religion among their fellow subjects.

It has been indeed pretended that the Church has had her day—that she has outlived her calling—that her work is done—that a “new moral world” must spring up, and that the emancipation of the race must be committed to its powers. The masses have been taught that another and a better Gospel has to be announced to men. How incumbent then for the Church to stand by her ancient landmarks, and “to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” But this involves constantly progressive attainments in individual and collective piety. The Church government and order advocated in this volume, is not religion. It is only one of the ways for promoting its growth and applying its principles. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” it is not sacramentarian and ritual, it is joy in the Holy Ghost; it is faith working by love and melting the heart; it is holiness adorning the life; it is righteousness and peace. If we stand up for forms,

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even the most scriptural, and neglect the end they have in view, we place our souls in imminent hazard—we risk our eternal well-being. Let not the orthodox Dissenter plume himself on exemption from this common peril. It is possible he may stand by Nonconformity and ignore the substance that gives it worth ;—" Faith in Christ, and repentance towards God," and descend to a deeper perdition in proportion as he falls from a loftier height. The author therefore would consider the writing of this brief history as a part of his ministry, and would urge all with whom he stands connected, not merely the Congregation that waits on his ministrations, and the Sunday Scholars for whose salvation his soul daily longs, but every member of the Church, to look well to the actual state of the heart as in the sight of God ; knowing that whatever may be the supposed clearer light, and whatever the flame of a profession, no heart has any more religion than God discovers there. May the history of good men and zealous churches make us lovers of such, and may we " be followers of those who by faith and patience are now inheriting the promises."

Are we not called to consider our mortality. " The Fathers, where are they ; and the Prophets do they live for ever ?" The wise and reverend

heads are made to lie low,—the useful life comes to a period, and by such instances we are addressed as in the language of revelation to consider our latter end. But not the fathers alone. In these memorials we have seen a premature termination put to the labours of some who had just “buckled on the harness,” and both younger Ministers and Teachers are reminded of the uncertain tenure by which we hold every thing earthly, and not to be sanguine of the fair picture of the future, which a youthful imagination is apt to sketch. How painful the stroke when there had been promise of valuable talent, along with worth and loveliness. Add still to the bitterness of such a disappointment, the frustration of good hopes,—the hopes of a benevolent mind, teeming with plans of public usefulness, the extinction for the present, of a shining light in a darkened world, and we are ready to say the ways of Providence are dark and intricate; in striving to scan them we are “puzzled in mazes and perplexed in errors.” Genius—the rarest of human endowments, and piety—the best of divine communications, fading like a nipt blossom or an unripe fruit, falling into the place of weeds and withered leaves; this is a stroke heavier than we well can bear, it pierces to the holiest sanctuary of the heart. Scholarship and

religion deck themselves in weeds and bend over a termination so premature of labours so promising.

The mercy of God shines forth in his providential proceedings with the Church, whose history we have traced. There have been times when one part could not bear with another, but the Lord has borne with them all. There have been deviations from the temper of the Gospel, but there is no trace that the Lord has left them to fall into destructive errors, and he has not removed his candlestick from them. Nay, these deviations have only served to show, by the self-adjusting power in the Church itself, that the system it embraces is from God. As the size, distance, and motions of the heavenly bodies have been adjusted with such marvellous precision, that even their apparent perturbations and eccentricities, caused by their mutual action on each other, produce a perfect counterbalance, and secure the permanent stability of the whole system. We rest upon the foundation of Christ and his Apostles. We are built upon the stone which God has laid in Zion. We have Christ and his Apostles with us, not as venerable recollections, but as present and ever living powers; not by vicars and successors, but in their own proper

agency, and as they have ever been with the Church from the first until now.

The faithfulness of God has been displayed. The fathers are no more, but he has poured out his spirit upon their seed, his blessing upon their offspring; the children have risen up to call him blessed, one and another are still induced to say—with courage and pleasure to say—I am the Lord's; and thus the Lord does not leave himself without witnesses.

What a source of consolation is opened in the unchangeableness and eternity of the Lord Jesus Christ. While the under shepherds and their flocks are subject to removals and death, He remains the same, ever present and all sufficient—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Because he has lived this Church has lived also. Though not ambitious to have a history, it has gradually gained one under his fostering care, which affords many subjects of grateful and humbling review. It has raised for His worship a capacious and beautiful Chapel, which has been and will be, the birth-place to God of many immortal souls; it has grown from a small number to a goodly fellowship, through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit; it has been shaken by some rude storms but never moved from its rock;

it has enjoyed in the services of its sanctuary many a time of sweet and heavenly refreshing ; it has sat at the table of its Saviour and his banner over it has been love, red, indeed, with blood, but bright with glory ; it cherishes in its bosom many valuable institutions, sustained and conducted by labourers who are the savour of the Church and the salt of the world ; it has provided a shelter for the head of infirmity and age ; it has fed its poor with bread ; it has looked around it with kindness on those who were pining and perishing ; it has provided in the “ Maternal Society ” consolation for many mothers at the time of pain and peril, and clothed their helpless children ; it has maintained for nearly fifty years a school for girls of indigent parents ; it was the first to take up the glorious Sunday School system in the town, and contrives to keep many of the scholars in its classes till they reach almost the verge of maturity ; it has sent its tens of thousands of Tracts into all the streets that lie around it ; it has provided places of worship and preachers for its share of the neighbouring villages ; it has cheerfully and liberally supported its own ministers ; it has paid its own congregational expenses ; and its contributions to the various religious and benevolent Societies may be

numbered by many thousands; and at this time in looking back upon the past, it has had the presence and sympathy of all the other denominations, while expressing its humble gratitude to God, and its affection to its present Minister, on entering on another fifty years, which, as they roll their rapid circles, will bear most that were then assembled into the eternal world. And now while presenting the prayer for the whole Israel of God, they will not grudge a speciality of application to our own department of that Israel—

“SAVE THY PEOPLE, O LORD, AND BLESS THINE INHERITANCE,—FEED THEM ALSO, AND LIFT THEM UP FOR EVER! LET THY WORK, O LORD, APPEAR UNTO THY SERVANTS, AND THY GLORY, UNTO THEIR CHILDREN. AND LET THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD OUR GOD BE UPON US; AND ESTABLISH THOU THE WORK OF OUR HANDS UPON US; YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT!”

THOMAS BARCHAM, PRINTER, READING.

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